

IN THE C. P.,

OR

SKETCHES IN PROSE & IN VERSE,

DESCRIPTIVE OF

SCENES AND MANNERS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA

BY

“PEKIN.”

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T O L I L Y.

VERSES, like flowers, with bashful hope are fraught,
And the poor stanzas which this Book contains
To Thee, the Queen of Flowers, are, trembling, brought
To crave a boon, as guerdon of their pains—
Thy smile!—This gained, they hide the blush which grows
Behind the broad, straight back of henchman Prose !

P R E F A C E.

THESE sketches were published in the *Pioneer* (under the signature of "PEKIN") from time to time during the past eight years. They are re-published in the hope that for others, besides the writer, they may have interest as portraying some of the lights and shadows of mofussil life. The romance of the "Gorgeous East" is rapidly fading away; but even on the sleepy levels of the Central Provinces there are beauties of scene and season, and passing gleams of humorous contrast, which lift the spirit awhile above the monotony of official life, and out of the narrow "hum-drum" range of provincial thought. The progress of communications and the development of commerce will soon change the manners and customs of the Central Provinces; and, therefore, it is the more worth the while of a sympathetic observer to retain some record of things as they are.

NAGPUR, }
November 1881. }

L. K. L.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Although the Central Provinces have had Sir Richard Temple to report on them, and although they have been the nursery of not a few distinguished public men, they are still terra incognita to numbers of Anglo-Indians. Against the contingency of these sketches being glanced at by any person who is not familiar with the C. P., and who cares to understand the administrative system to which reference is occasionally made in them, the following explanatory details are, therefore, prefixed:

What may be called the macrocosm of administration in the C. P. consists of a Chief Commissioner, a Judicial Commissioner (or High Court), and the Heads of the Departments of Police, Excise, Forests, Engineering, and Education. The macrocosm has its ordinary centre at Nagpur; but in the hot weather this centre shifts to the Mahadev hill-group of the Salpura Range.

There are eighteen microcosms or districts. The members of each microcosm are the Deputy Commissioner (who has charge of the district; and is at once Collector, Magistrate, and Judge); his Assistant (or Extra Assistant, as he is called, if he be a native); the District Superintendent of Police, and the Civil Surgeon (who is sometimes an Apothecary, or a Native Hospital Assistant).

Between the macrocosm and the microcosms there is a stellar group of Commissioners of Divisions, each of whom supervises the business of a certain number of districts, and is a Sessions Judge and Court of Appeal.

Owing to the fact that judicial functions are not as yet differentiated from the other duties of administration, the Deputy Commissioner and his Assistants have to work very hard; and even the Commissioners are not rich in leisure. The plague of ennui which might otherwise become epidemic in those microcosms which are not enlivened by the military, is thus avoided.

The majority of the Deputy Commissioners are military men. A few civilians creep from time to time into the vacancies left by leave or retirement.

Any passed pupil of Mr. Scoones or Mr. Wren, who joins the C. F. Commission, will at once be known as a " supernumerary." To borrow an idea from Hermetic philosophy, the supernumerary may be described as an " elemental spirit " dwelling, for the most part, in ink and foolscap. He cannot reasonably hope to become a Commissioner; and he can only be incarnated as a Deputy Commissioner after several decades of concentrating toil.

Optimism teaches us to be satisfied with the happiness of the majority; and that life itself is to be regarded as a good. The latter maxim is found true by the oldest supernumerary in the pleasant cold season which these Provinces enjoy: and that there are other amenities of scene and society the following pages (written by one who is approaching the dignity of Patriarch of the Elementals) may serve to adumbrate.

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PART I.



S C E N I C.

I.

ONE said : "The land is bare and drear,
No fair romantic dells appear,
No Muse of Poetry is near !

II.

My friends are serfs in Frodi's mⁱl,
They grind but salt and sorrow still,
They love not the poetic quill !

III.

Lo ! we grow harsh and yellow-skinne^d—
It shall be called *prosaic Ind*,
The land against God's love has sinned !"

IV.

Then sighed the Tamarind to the Palm—
" Have courage ; from this thunderous calm
A rain will fall and bring us balm !

V.

And yonder Briton of the plain
Who cries a fretful cry of pain
Will feel new motions in his brain.

VI.

He sees not the fair things we see ;
Blind fisher of the sunlight-sea,
Orbed with the bright day's poesy !

VII.

He sets his couch beneath the stars
No noisy world his slumber mars ;
His spirit feels no prison-bars !

VIII.

Behind the Palm and Tamarind
The moon leads up a gentle wind —
Man's heart, and not the land has sinned !"

ERRATA.

- Page 9. Verse II., Line 2, *read* "drave" for "drove."
- „ 21. Line 3, *read* "daze" for "doze."
- „ 28. Verse III., Line 7, *read* "stales" for "states."
- „ 39. Verse XIII., Line 1, *read* "tethered" for "lchtered."
- „ 54. Line 17, *read* "dusky" for "dusty."
- „ 55. Line 16, *read* "calf y-seue" for "calfy-seene."
- „ 71. Line 9, *read* "adapt" for "adopt."
- „ 84. Line 19, *read* "Steyne" for "Sfeyue."
- „ 89. Line 2, *read* "muttered" for "mutterd."
- „ 89. Line 9, *read* "chandan" for "chandon."
- „ 110. Verse I., Line 3, *read* "lying" for "laying."
- „ 143. Last Line but four, *read* "imbedded" for "imbeded."
- „ 159. Line 25, *read* "Why" for "Whey."
- „ 169. Verse II., Line 3, *read* "fairy" for "fair."
- „ 186. Line 9, *read* "Israclites" for "Israelities."

I N T H E C. P.

PART I.

S C E N I . C .

MADAN MAHAL.

TURN aside from the main road from Jabalpur, where the finger-post directs you to Madan Mahal, and passing through a handful of huts clustered about a ruined well, you come by a peepul and mango-shadowed pathway, the course of which is narrowed and broken by juts and root-like ridges of granite, to the foot of a curious hill. From top to bottom it is studded with slabs, ball-like boulders, and balanced plates of blackened rock. Only a starving shrub or two clings in the dust of its crevices. A steep and sandy pathway slips past a sturdy outlier, and goes warily up between the imminent crags. It gains a level, and we find a mango and a palm or two hidden in the wild. A ponderous block, balanced as it were magically on the peak of a massive upright, attracts us for a moment. We pass on to a steeper rise, where the way has been blasted through obstinate granite, and by a conical pool amid the rocks, the slowly-failing waters of which have left their ring-like records on the boulders of the marge, we climb above the plane of a hermit-held cavern and come to the ridge of the hill. At the further end of it a strange sight meets us. A boulder mightier than them all and rounded to the likeness of a gigantic pebble, leans against a firm-bedded fragment.

On the top of it is poised a ruined fort. This is the fort of Madan Mahal, built by the Gond Prince, Madan Sing, in the year of our Lord 1100.

Let us ascend to the summit of the tower. A broken and narrow staircase leads us from one embattled platform to another. We look forth upon green corn-fields on the one hand, and on the other upon a confused and unnatural medley of tumbled and rounded black rocks strewn at random over ridge and hollow. The contrast between the two prospects is so complete that the rugged eminence with its fort atop, which seems to rule the rougher view, assumes an individuality in our eyes.

We cannot but think that that Madan Sing who raised this mahal on the giant pebble, must have had an individuality much stronger than his tower. Whether his relations to the people he governed were beneficial or otherwise, he evidently intended that they should be lasting. An unassailable position, walls so strongly built that they have stood for 700 years, dispositions for enduring comfort in the shape of *gusul-khanas*, a tank and outlying cloisters, or piping times of peace-chambers for his family—all indicate a determination to remain, whether moodily or joyfully. It is clear that the notion of government which this prince possessed was to stick fast as a personal power by the homes of his subjects.

The sharp whistle of a kite, shrilling near at hand, startles us. His white wings and yellow beak flash past, and lead our gaze down to the gleam of the tanks that lie neighbourly below. Between them runs the lengthy street of the ancient town of Garha, long the capital of Gond rule. A straggling street of mud-walled, tile-roofed houses, from the thresholds of which the palace of Madan Mahal looks like a watch-tower on the hill.

This place was in those old days prosperous. Under the eye of their prince the townsmen felt a confidence which the

roughness of the times seldom warranted. Trust is the basis of trade, and they showed it. Chieftains with their retainers arriving to do reverence at the court, made a splendour in the long street. Madan Sing himself, coming down from his castle-height, would sometimes pass along, and then all loungers would stand aside, and shop-keepers rising up give salutation, and stare broadly, whispering the while to country cousins—"The Rajah—Have you seen his new fort on the hill there?"

How were they affected towards him—these shop-keepers and the tillers of the adjacent corn-fields, come in for a day in town? One can imagine them either fearing and hating him very much, or trusting and loving him. They could not be indifferent. Was he not of them and among them? Was not his life to be passed in the work of governing them? Was he not the source of all law, and of the punishments which enforce law? None might fancy him a mere sojourner for a season, or a lodger in that rock-built palace, and put him off as such. He knew all the chiefs and the great townsmen; and what he said they heard as the voice of an authority which owned no appeal. One may be sure that the name of Madan Sing was either a bugbear for refractory children, or a crowing cry for urchins. In neither case did it signify an abstraction. Abstractions have small power over ignorant minds.

The long-drawn, trembling whistle of the kite again rouses us. This time the bird rises and flaps away to the right, and lifting our eyes to follow, we see through the thick sunshine the white cantonments and the gleaming bungalows of the City of the Peaks. This is the modern Garha. Prosperity has passed from the Sagar to the Hanuman Tal. Behind are low hills; but on them no tower beacons.

Where is the Madan Mahal of to-day? Some one points to a square, thatched building on the edge of the town, and

says—That is the Zillah Cutcherry. Who dwells there? we ask. Who wields now the personal power that was Madan Sing's? The answer is—His name cannot be told of a certainty. He who was hailed yesterday as lord there, may be gone to-day. & No one established ruler keeps a life-long dominion in those chambers. Many come and go, and their staying or flitting is a thing indifferent to the people. They that arrive are but the ministers of certain authoritative ideas. From their words an appeal lies to loftier exponents; and all men know that they are the *gomashcas* of a power unrevealed in the flesh. The spirit of abstractions is the true King of Garha.

The King has changed—and the people? Some peasants, bent on laying their offering of grain at the shrine of a temple not far from the summit, come trooping up the hill. By their faces, so unintelligent and brutalised by early toil, we see that they cannot have changed for the better in knowledge. How then shall they pay due reverence to their King? The time has gone by for pomp and show. By what magic shall the spirit of abstractions appeal to the hearts of the poor? Hero in the hands of one of them is perhaps the answer to our query—A stamped “true copy” of a judgment. This is the bannerol of justice, brocaded with silver, which every meanest man among them delights to unfurl. Justice is the Avatar of the unrevealed power, which is King : and to Justice they pay homage.

MARBLE ROCKS.

THE moonlit gorge locks in the stream;
Rock-faces, where they front the beam,
Are strangely pallid in their gleam.

II.

A high cliff-shadow darkly falls ;
 We glide betwixt enchanted walls ;
 One dazzles and one half appals.

III.

Only the gar's low sound is heard ;
 Or, when the rowlocks louder gird,
 The sharp flight of a startled bird !

IV.

Light laughter breaks the stilly spell ;
 The steersman lifts his hand to tell
 How here the hathi's footsteps fell,

V.

And dimpled with resistless shock,
 Deep imprints in the aged rock ;
 Making its marble fame a mock !

VI.

Then bids our eyes their aspect keep
 On where the cliff-tops nearer creep—
 The marvel of the monkey's leap !

VII.

"O doubtless, Sir, this tale is true—
 The monkey leapt—but, if there grew
 On the crag's edge a lithe bamboo—

VIII.

Is the stretched tale less wondrous made ?
 The bandar was no whit afraid,
 When with his tail the long boughs swayed !"

IX.

He leapt into the shades of time,
 And we, who linger here to rhyme,
 Behold but carbonate of lime !

THE TEMPLE OF NUR SING.

THE temple of Nur Sing Gee is not architecturally but typically notable. Its three parabola domes, as seen transiently by the traveller in the Nerbudda Valley, are symbols of one solution of a great problem. How to spend creditably the superfluities of one's wealth is a question to torment the soul. Custom helps the decision. If more than one man has made his name great by endowing hospitals or keeping a racing steed, why should not yet another do the same? If gladiator-shows are in vogue, why not build an amphitheatre?

I am assured that in coming to the determination which he did, Jaganath Sing acted strictly in accordance with the notions of his time. He was a landlord; and therefore more prone to the idiosyncrasies of wealthy estate-holders than to those of the uncoffered capitalist. Model cottages would have been more in his line than model lodging-houses, but unfortunately in the year 1795 the idea of sweet homes for the poor had not sprouted in the valley. Experimental farming would have been more congenial than a mining company, but neither of these aims were then conceived. He did what gentlemen in like circumstances were then in the habit of doing,—he began to build a worship-house for Vishnu.

The popularity of this ambition was owing to many causes. In the first place, the work has that religious sanction which gives the glow of pious merit to the author, and suggests the thought of it to others. In the next place, there is always an interest attaching to the design and erection of any edifice of pretension, which is by no means a small consideration to a man of leisure. In the third place, and this is the most important thought of all, there are certain ceremonies connected with the consecration of a temple which give scope to such an expenditure of largess as must needs prove the greatness of the giver. The glory of bringing in the idol is almost greater than

that of the finished shrine. The *utyapan* feasts are the *panis et circenses* of the Brahmin crowd. Except the marriage of his daughter, there is no occasion upon which the name of a Hindu may more splendidly wax or more miserably wane. Jaganath Sing went on patiently building for six years. In the seventh year from its commencement, the shadowy central chamber of the pile was ready for the reception of the carven *murat* or image. It was time for the *utyapan* of Nur Sing, the Avatar of Vishnu which he had fixed upon for honor.

While cunning carvers from Jaipur gave finishing touches to the stone block which they had fashioned into the semblance of the incarnate god, Jaganath collected great stores of grain within the walls of his mansion.

The lowest storey was filled to overflowing. Piles of white *moond-e* wheat, and ruddy *hathiya* wheat crumbled into trickling grains at the tread of the visitor. Heaps of yellow *dal* contrasted pleasingly with mountains of green *moong*. A snowy mound of whitest flour told how the women, whose mill-stones sounded all day in the courtyard, had ground and ground. Near where they sat lay long ranges of *chulas*, or cooking hearths of plastered mud.

The Brahmins came in, in throngs, from far and wide. Each man got his cooking hearth and his fill of flour; and they baked their cakes and ate on the evening and on the morning of the great day.

They praised the name of the great and pious lord of the South Bank, whose magnanimity no man could doubt. Had he not spent a lakh of rupees on food and *chulas* for poor holy men? They made glorious his god's *utyapan* with the zeal of their worship about the image on the dais, and the fervency of their muttering from the *pothis* or sacred books. Blinded with flower wreaths and sated with food-offerings, the hideous idol almost smiled upon the gathering, while the music sounded deafeningly, and the dancers madly whirled. Six selected

Brahmins lifted the throne of the god and bore him into the temple.

The shout that went up to heaven at this moment was as incense to the soul of Jaganath. It was heard by Gonds and low caste husbandmen in distant villages. "Nur Sing, Nur Sing! Great is the name of the lord of the South Bank!" Did he not deserve this praise? For six years he had been spending his thoughts and his money on the raising of this shrine. It had cost him three lakhs of rupees. Surely he, too, had signally solved the problems which perplexes rich & men—how to spend creditably the superfluity of one's wealth. The sound of his fame would go on and on till it reached Nagpur; there the great Bhonslah would hear it and approve.

The great Bhonslah heard it. That he approved, is witnessed by the following facts:—He sent a silver *chob*, or stick of honor, to Jaganath, and decreed that he and his family should bear the title of Rao (Prince) thenceforth and for ever.

Thus was this pious gentle's fame exalted by the mouth of royalty. From the voices of the people his deed obtained another and a perpetual recognition.

The town of *Chota Guawarra*, where he had built his fame, received in current appellation the name of "Nursingpore." Rao Jaganath is dead long ago, but his temple stands; it seems to say to the wealthy Hindu who brings his offering there—Go and do thou likewise. The savings from the revenues of not a few fair estates are yearly devoted to the end thus suggested. No *chobs* of honor arrive from Nagpur, but the churches rise without them.

A foreign Government which holds a different religion can pronounce clearly against a devotion to aims spiritual, that leads to a neglect of material enterprise. It declares its preference for secular endowment, for the building of schools and dispensaries. It would fain see resources of the land developed by those whose greatest interest it is to make it fertile, and promises

khilluts and *sunnuds* of honor for all who comply. But custom and the voice of the *guru* are stronger than these inducements.

The teaching and the conservancy, the mining and the manuring, which Sahibs love, are things alien and yet unprized of the people. Why sacrifice the certain fame of the temple-founder for the uncertain credit of a patron of sanitation ? Religion is before all. The religion of duty to one's fellow-man is not yet orthodox here. The holy beggar must be cherished at the expense of the low caste labourer. The railings of the village school rot for want of paint, while the neighbouring temple walls are being whitened.

DURGAVATI.

1.

11.

III.

IV.

Brave daughter of the Rajput blood
 When that disaster noised, thy pride,
 High as the howdah's golden hood,
 Breasted a dagger's point and died !

Durgavati !

V.

The kingdom of the Gonds is gone,
 And strangers rule o'er hill and plain,
 But never statelier form has shone
 On the still lake which owns thy reign,

Durgavati !

In 1564, Asaf Khan, an officer of the great Akbar, invaded Gondwarra and defeated the Queen Regent, Rani Durgavati, at Singargurh, in the Jabalpur district. She retreated towards Mandla. A large tank near Jabalpur is still called the Rani Talao, in memory of her.

A VISION OF THE ARPA.

I SHALL never forget it. It haunts me in my dreams wherever I go. I think I see it now—that deathly river-bed.

Who would have thought that the dreary plain which stretches about the Sentinel mountain had within itself a sunken tract more dreary ? A hideous serpent of sand crawls through the bare and crumbling fields, making their desolate extent, so sparsely sprinkled with the verdure of jungle shrubs, look tender and temperate by contrast.

I had chosen, in the heat of a violent May, to exchange the close atmosphere of my sleeping-room for the broad chamber which has the star-lit heaven for a roof ; and my couch was so placed that I lay within a stone's cast of a sandy channel which was once the broad bed of a river. For some nights I enjoyed

a pleasant and regular repose in this situation, where the airs of heaven came softly, and lulled me to sleep with their coolness.

At length, one evening, the light wind which had favoured me changed its direction, and blew from the opposite side of the channel; and in the night which followed, my slumber was so disturbed by the persistence of a strange and ominous vision that I slept in that place again no more.

It seemed to me that I had waked, and was sitting upright in the moonlight, watching the mists that rose from the sandy bed, where all that remained of a powerful river crept along in a thread-like driblet, or lingered in scattered pools. I observed that in one spot, directly opposite to me, the vapours, gathering together and growing cloud-like in their consistency, became yet thicker and darker, until their opacity assumed a definite outline, and their solidity took a distinguishable shape. At the same time, as if impelled by the urgency of the breeze which puffed fitfully behind it, this mist-born embodiment moved smoothly across the level strip of sand which lay between, and ascending swiftly the bank on which my couch was placed, stood shadow-like in the moonlight at my feet. The dimness and uncertainty which had draped the lines of its figure passed instantly off like the confusion from the hues of a picture thrown by a magic lantern upon a whitened wall; and I saw the phantom of a bowed and dejected but yet litho-limbed old man, the color of whose skin and whose features were as of a native of the country. His grey head was heaped with sand, as with the ashes of mourning. About his loins was a narrow girdle made of the twine-like fibre of the roots of a wild plant. His bare body was covered with filth of every description, and a green tangle of water weeds and foul scum hung about his long, lean arms and fingers. In one hand he held a piece of wood, shaped like a truncheon, and in the other a light basket, in which, besides several phials of the kind drug-vendors carry about with them, was a heaping up of gathered filth and reek-

ing corruption, such as never before offended human nostrils. Overpowered by the wonder of the apparition and by the stench which accompanied it, I seemed to lose both the strength to move and the ability to exclaim; and sat there, dumbly staring at it, and trembling at the woeful gleam which came from its rheumy eyes, like the reflection of the lunar ray from pools on a marshy moor. Suddenly the phantom raised the truncheon which its right hand grasped, and dropping the basket from its left, pointed with the disengaged fingers to a scale marked in red upon the thin end of the stick. I saw, then, that it was an instrument for weighing, commonly used by the villagers of the neighbourhood, and resembling in principle the old English steel-yard. Standing in this attitude, the apparition spoke; and its voice was hollow and weak, and having a bitter gurgle in it, such as the voice of that stream must have which flows through the valley of the shadow of death. "Ha! Ha!" it said, "lives of men—for each seer, a score! Little do they think when they insult the aged river with their wanton defilements that their health—nay, even their lives—may pay the forfeit of their sin. They fancy that because I am old and drivelling, therefore I am powerless for harm; but see this basket of their peltings—what fine matter for sublimation, condensings, distillation, is here. For each seer a score, as I said, and my friend the sun helps me bravely. I do but draw the stopper out of this phial, and"—as the phantom suited the action to the word, it seemed to me that I fell back in a swoon. Perhaps it was but an interval of dreamless sleep. It did not last long. I recovered to the perception that the dreadful vision was still there. With a louder voice than before, the incarnation of the dying river began:—

" My name is Arpa. I was once a scorner of men. My birth was of the thunderstorm, and the same element that fulfilled me with strong flowing life, brought joy and regeneracy to all nature. The fields smiled with new-found verdure

as, arrow-like, I speeded by. The song of the doleful *koel* was stayed. The tyrant sun hid his face in vaporous veils, and men walked abroad without fear of his deadly javelins.

"The waterfowl fluttered to greet me, and the women with vessels of earth and of brass upon their heads came reverently to wet their feet in my flow. Then was I proud of my strength, and scornful of weak men, as foolish youth is scornful. I tore the frail canoe from its moorings by the bank, and swirled it with eddying glee, and a wild down-race for twenty miles of travel! I overflowed my banks and made havoc in the ryots' fields. I hurled back the waters of weakling streams that sought to join with mine, and made them recoil with their gathered impurities upon the villages that had hoped never to see the cast out filth again. My youth lasted with the rains; with the cold season began my quiet prime; as the sun grew stronger and the days longer, I saw that old age was come. Day by day my strength diminished. The coward god of morning, shameless once more, smote silently, yet surely, sucking the life-blood from me as a tiger drains its prey. My fluent beauty turned to sluggish sand, in which the relics of my life loitered and dribbled like little spillings from a broken jug. Upon the forsaken, parched-up banks came forth coarse weeds with yellow blossoms that glared on me mockingly, as in mimicry of the eye of day. Rank blades sprang up where the drowned grass had died, and, climbing from pebble to pebble, a noisome fungus tainted and beslined every hollow with unwholesome green. Now it was the turn of weak men to mock at me. How they overdid their advantage, you shall hear. All the mischiefs of my deadly vapours be upon them and upon you; for you, also, are of the human kind.

"They made my banks and me the common cess-pit of their villages. They sent their cattle and their dogs to churn up and befoul my shallows. They arrested the feeble relics of my stream with dunes of sand, and in the pools thus formed they

dipped their polluted garments and laved their unclean limbs. They dug holes in the sand for the same end, till all about me was riddled with pits and trenches, and my sickening humours, thus confined and working to the surface, threw out foul crustings and slimy water growths. I seemed to rot while I lived, and the taint of my body cried aloud to heaven. The flame of noon beating upon this scene of despair, raised up the elements of disease in invisible mists, which at night sank down again and hung about my dreary hollows. Thus I became noxious to those who abused me, and for every seer of corruption cast upon my dishonored home, I count the weakening of a score of lives. How my fevers burn the poor mortals up, how their spleens enlarge, and how they groan in pain ! "I will not kill you," continued the phantom, grinning fiendishly, "for you have the power to prevent in the future the ills which I have endured in the past; but you shall suffer of me, that the remembrance of your pains may urge you more instantly to action. One word more before I end. Though I die to-day, I shall rise to-morrow. My aged weakness shall be re-born in youthful strength. When you hear the thunder thunder think of the Arpa!"

So saying, the spectre vanished. I remained for a moment or two stupefied. A wild dog, answering the cry of a jackal which rang from the jungle on the opposite bank, uttered a long and melancholy howl. At the sound, I recovered myself, but only to fall back into a deep slumber which resembled a second swoon. When I waked, the dawn was breaking behind the Sentinel mountain. The yellow breadth of the bare river-bed lay ghastly and lone before me. I shuddered; and in that instant was aware of a fire in my veins and a throbbing in my brow, which let no doubt arise of their meaning. I was smitten with a malarious fever, and the insulted Arpa was avenged !

VIDHARBA.

I.

THE plains of Vidharba are bare to the sun ;
 Its mosques and its temples are few and far ;
 Its forts are of mud, and its low hills are
 Straight and ungracious and swarthy dun.

II.

Yet when the splendour of eve doth rest
 Low on the ripples of wide jowar,
 Glad are its people that nought can mar
 All the magnificence poured in the west.

III.

Proudly they murmur, as rapt they gaze,
 "There are no halls of the tired day-star /
 Half so ample as these halls are,
 Nay, nor visions of rarer rays.

IV.

"What if their fortunes are bare and low ?—
 They can look over the world afar—
 The edge of the earth is their harbour-bar
 And love like a boat to the bar can row."

A COTTON PRESS.

ONE sees a white-washed brick-building with an upper-storey of corrugated zinc. A tall iron chimney is alongside, and round about is a yard thickly strewn with net-like bags of fluffy, snow-white fibre, and with oblong rectangular bales, rigid in sacking and hoops. Carts are filing in with infinite supplies of the snowy, fluffy fibre, and a pulley is constantly hoisting up the bags to an opening in the zinc wall.

At regular intervals of short duration, mummy-like articles are borne by staggering men out of the doorway of the brick basement, and deposited in the yard. They are seen to be bales of the rigid description aforesaid. An observation of the concomitant disappearance of fluffy bundles at the upper-storey, and appearance of slab-like bales at the lower-storey, leads one to infer that the latter are the transformed and shrouded bodies of the former. Plainly, the fleecy bales are cruelly done to death by some monstrous and silent-working instrument housed within this ugly building. One might fancy it to be the execution chamber of the Government of Terror, and these carts to be the tumbrils carrying the condemned. Yon dowdy bulk of cotton, which is being hustled in at the window, looks like a dishevelled old woman hurried off to her fate ; and hark ! there is the jangle of the bell which announces the fulfilment of her doom.

Passing in at the basement doorway, one meets what is presumably the corpse of the lamented lady, neatly done up in *tat-putty* and hooping. It looks so respectable and matter-of-fact, that one is inclined to change one's view of the operations conducted in the interior. One perceives that this is not a destroying, but a transforming workshop. Here, loose and straggling personalities, with fibres too susceptible for exposure, are at one stroke compacted and case-hardened, and furnished all over with a comfortable callosity to protect them in their passage through the world. *Cr-rash!* a noise as of the simultaneous breaking of a hundred champagne bottles, announces the birth at once of this new idea, and of another compressed cotton bale. One sees a strong iron door fly open in the side of a massy column of that metal, which mounts from floor to ceiling in the dusk of the bare room. The column is hollow, and on a flat bed in the interior of the base is revealed a creamy, curdled mass of fibre, slowly solidifying into an alabaster-like prism with horizontal laminæ. The pressure

is from a great weight of metal, which slowly and noiselessly comes down. The lowest plate is toothed and grooved, and, as it descends, dusky workmen, with the greatest activity, thrust flexible lengths of hoop iron through the grooves, and bending them round the bale, unite the ends in similar grooves in the bed below ; others simultaneously clothe the sides of the bale with sacking, and the steadily lowering pressure binds cotton, sacking, hoops and all in one toughly-integumented whole. The giant lifts his hand and releases the inanimate patient. *Houp-là !*—the bale is rolled on the floor. See how solid, well-knit and unimpressionable is this bulk of cotton, erst so loosely coherent and so capable of soil. It may journey the world through without a fleck of harm to its heart's core now !

The giant's hand has been seen—where is the strong arm to which it belongs ? The visitor ascends a wooden stair, which leads to the upper chamber of zinc. Rising into the dimly-lighted space of this severely-simple loft, he begins to sneeze and cough from the irritation of floating particles, fine as meal dust. This, the snowy flakes upon the floor, and the rumour and quaking as of a mighty quern, make him think confusedly of Frodi's Mill, and the milky way which flows from it. When he sees more clearly, he is aware that there is no mill, only a giant-elbow, like the elbow of Thor, raising itself slowly between two pillars of iron in the centre of the room. This huge iron elbow is of the arm which controls the hand below. It is lifting the hand in readiness for another crushing descent. The victim is not long in coming. One of the fleecy bundles which were seen in the yard is hoisted in at the window, rapidly stripped of its confining network, and borne aloft like a pillar of cloud by half-a-dozen active workmen, still cohering in a single mass, but with flakelets dropping from it, like shorn locks from the head of Eld. It is thrown into a trough at the foot of the iron pillars. There it is furiously dismembered by a crew of tormentors, who cram it piece-meal into a cavern

which the lifted hand of the giant discloses to view. As a final insult, one of the band leaps into the cavity and tramples on the quivering fragments. He nearly pays the penalty of his life, for, with a hurried jangle of a bell, the hand begins to descend. *He has only just time enough to spring out into the room. His companions, with winch and rack, close up the side of the trap. Grimly and gradually the iron elbow straightens down, till, *cr-rash!* it bursts open the door at the base of the shaft, and the visitor knows that another bale is pressed and ready for the sacking. More wonderful than the subjection of this giant to the services of commerce, is the behaviour of those natives of India who lend and supplement its action at the invitation of the same magician. The slow and enthusiastic labourer of the tropics is transformed into an active and noisily-eager servant of toil, with a cheerfulness and endurance beyond the average.

The stimulus of payment by the bale possesses him like a mystic *aflatus*. As the coolies hurry to and fro amid the cloud-like masses of cotton, they look like impersonations of the *Maruts*, at their task of driving the cows of Indra. The man whose business it is to work the winch, springs upon it like a tiger on its prey, and performs a series of bounds as the handle revolves. Downstairs the ministrants of the pressed bale are alert and handy.

They have learned the value of time. Commerce, while working for its own ends, has done them this supreme favour.

Thus in many respects this plain, unbeautiful building is a temple of wonder. To the seeing eye there is much also that is beautiful in it; and the beauty is not all of the present hour.

A LEGEND OF POWNAR.

I.

BENEATH grey Pownar's rugged steep,
 Where a famed wizard once did rule
 The waters of the Dham o'erleap
 A ledge of rock and form a pool
 A deep, dark pool !

II.

This wizard prince, the legend is,
 By chipping off the tops of reeds
 Could lop the heads of enemies,
 And guard in peace his silvan meads—
 His herd-cropped meads !

III.

But Shah Kabir, of equal lore,
 Advancing headless o'er the plain,
 Outdid the mage, who left the shore
 And ended in the pool his reign—
 His strange, still reign !

IV.

His drowned corse to the waters gave
 A magic which might still endure,
 But modern days less reverence have,
 And generous virtues now are fewer,
 Are sadly fewer !

V.

Who e'er upon the pool's brink prest,
 And prayed for basons bright and new,
 Wherewith to entertain his guest,
 And in the wave some rice grains threw—
 With real faith threw.

VI.

To him the light of morn displayed,
The longed-for vessels on the bank ;
Which, when his kindly feast was made,
At dusk he brought, and down they sank—
In dark depths sank !

VII. *

One eve, a man of little mind
Kept back the bowls ; they turned to clay !
They vanished into dust and wind !
And since, the weird has passed away—
Has passed away !

BY THE RIVER.

IT comes with a wide and shallow flow round a bend of the brown and steeply-graded shore, which gives it a cousinly likeness to most of the rivers in these parts. Reefs of ashen grey rocks run across and raise a fretful bar to its passage; but it soon recovers its quiet temper, and, as in atonement for that momentary ruffling, offers a tribute of green rushes on the hither side of each ridge. Lower down, the rocky bed falls sheer in the middle to a depth of some twenty feet, leaving perpendicular walls on each side; and as the lines of direction of the nearest reefs converge upon this depression, the effect is like that of a weir and lock, the lock being below the weir. Only the sluice-gates of this lock are for ever open, and the water which has hurled and glistened down the slopes of the weir tumbles noisily into the pitfall which the lock has prepared for it, and a fine spray goes up from the fall into the sunny air. Recovering from its surprise, the calm-tempered river dimples out between the lessening bluffs, and finds again its old leisurely flow beside the silt-banks further down. Pert

little water-birds wag their tails over its downfall, and ply their twinkling legs over the shining juts of the weir. There is a dreamy thunder and doze about the dewy verge of it which lures the wanderer to linger by the fall, and gaze forgetfully on the cool sheen of the shooting river. • Over him passes the soft light of the setting sun, and strikes silvery gleams from the blue•breadth of the upper stream, while, below, there are shadows on the water from the banks which are in shade. On one of these banks, but a little removed from the scarp, and standing piously on a rocky eminence which gives it a wide command, is a Hindoo temple of • deserted aspect and somewhat blackened by age.

•There is no sign of priest or worshipper about it, not even a splash of vermillion to betoken a peasant's regard. The rocks below are preferred in sacredness, for here we find a boulder, bedaubed with pious pigments and ringed with dedicat^{ed} toys and flowers. One is at a loss, at first, to understand why the temple is so neglected, for it is a handsome and far-seen building. A glance up-stream reveals a something which may have had power to produce the change. About a thousand paces off, a railway bridge spans the current. The iron high-way, it seems, is the road now followed ; and pilgrims and travellers no longer halt at the river ford and offer worship in the templ^e as they rest. They are hurried past to other scenes and other shrines. The priest long ago went his way, because his revenues had failed.

Thus the temple is become merely a picturesque object in the scenery. Looking at it contemplatively under the dreamy influence of the resounding weir, many apposite reflections are certain to accrue to the philosophic idler. Among these will probably be the thought that the abandoned fortune of the temple is typical of what occurs to most religions when the highway of life is made easier by material means. People pass by and leave the old faith standing. When the ways

of existence were hard and rugged, and a turn in the path might bring a tiger or a robber to the fore, they were keen to court the favour of a supernatural power, who might help them kindly along. Their imaginations pictured the universe as a projection on a large scale of the dangers and troubles which beset their little journeys through the wild; and the small reasoning power which they brought to bear upon the scheme of creation as thus conceived of, taught them that so great a coil could only be the result of a warfare between evil and its opposite. They, therefore, worshipped the emblem of the good power; and either propitiated the evil power with deprecatory offerings, or went so far as to worship him, as the stronger power of the two. By and by, they found that man's toil and his capacity for combining men and things in serviceable relationships, gave him command over the difficulties of the way, and made their progress comfortable, and even luxurious. When this grew to be so, their ideas of the order of the universe changed also. It was, indeed, an order, not a chaos; so orderly as to suggest a machine-like progress, and to negative the idea of any external interference. Thus Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Scandinavian theologies passed into picturesque myths; and thus the Christian religion, which rose from the ruined fall of all these, when the world was again mixed with barbarism and the old terrors revived, seems in its turn to be passing. Only in India do the old beliefs cling; and that is because the conditions of life are, on the whole, little changed for the mass of the people. The times are more secure, but life is still wretchedly hard.

When a railroad is set down among them, then indeed the power of men over nature, in at least one point of contact, is appreciated to the detriment of the roadside shrine; but there are plenty of miseries left to make prayer to the terrible Unseen a daily exercise. When this country shall grow rich,

then its old creeds, too, will become but picturesque studies, and cease to have vital force. But the minds that have shaken off their early superstitions are not at rest, therefore. The disposition to ask—Why? is strong as ever, and the solution is far off. To the physical distresses of early social life succeed the mental distresses of a complex and cultivated civilization. Will the terrors of *this* state, also, develop a new religion to absorb the spiritual cravings of the world? •

• AT GIRUR.

THIS is the holy hill of Sheik Farced.

He watched one morn upon its haggard brow,
Gazing from Girur towards Hinganghat,
Whence much trade pours ; and saw a packman pass,
And begged for alms. The pert knave mocked at him
And had gone by, but that the hermit prayed
That he would tell him what those sacks contained
The which his jingling bullocks gaily bore—
“ Stones !” scoffed the churl ; whereat all quietly, .
The Sheik said, “ Sooth—They are but worthless stones !”
And all the sacks on all the bullocks burst,
• And dinged with doleful rattle to the ground !
• There had been spices in them—betelnut,
Nutmegs and pân, and many a costly clove,
But all were made as flint and flaked the ground !
Nor long the trader wavered, but his head
Plumb, like a stone, between the saint’s feet dropped,
And prone he prayed and grovelled. Then my lord
Took pity on the humbled, sinful man,
And said—“ O blind one, now dost thou discern
The power of God—Go, fill thy sacks with leaves,
And learn that hermit’s will has heavenly stress.” .
No sooner said than heeded, and the trees,

Stripped leafless, soon bestowed the strained bags full.
As the last bullock staggered to his feet,
Behold a wonder baulked him, for the leaves
Turned gold, and dribble, drip, from every rent
Pattered a gleaming shower of broad mohurs !
Bismillah! how the huckster brightened up !
They say he turned a saint, and left his bones
On Girur—Well, amen, and peace to him !—
The hillside grins his heir in curious stones.

SWEVENS.

Now that the wells are full, that the ground is carpeted with green, that the trees are alive, that the air is moist and cool, it is difficult to look back on a time not far past when all this was otherwise, and not deem it to have been a dream. Can it be that this mild plain, that those placid hills were once inexorable as iron and terrible as the grave ? Was there a drought in this land flowing with water ? Did the wind die like the breaking of a silver wire in the fierce strain of noon-day ?

This is a volcanic country. The volcanoes are dead, but the crust they have left is liable to weird changes. The crater of Kilauea, in the Sandwich Islands, is a still, grey plain by day, bordered with luxuriant vegetation ; but, at night, every fissure is a flame, and it glows like a huge melting pot in a dark laboratory. If it be not a dream, the one season that is lately gone from here was like the night of Kilauea. In the ballad of the weird lady—

The swevens came up round Harold the Earl, like motes in the sunne beam.

Like motes in the sunbeam. Whether shaped by the weird lady or no, here are two motes which I remember to have seen in the light of May. *Sweven the first.*—An avenue of stunted

trees, whose burnt leaves rustle in the dry breath of evening. A roadway ruined by drought, loose stones mingling with the powdery dust. The weird twilight shows, on the one side, the parapet of a well, and, on the other, a small, mean building of brick and plaster, on the front of which is a rude cross. The well is black and dry, and the building deserted and falling to decay. One wonders how many people were stifled to death in that little chapel ere it was abandoned. Further on, there are huts rudely put together with mats and bamboos. They seem deserted. A few children are playing about, but there is no stir, nor voice of woman-kind. The bare ground slopes upward to the right, and on the breast of the rise is seen that most melancholy of sights—an empty bungalow with the thatch fallen mangy, and the white-wash peeling from the walls. At a turn of the road, the native official in charge of this desolate place presents himself, and makes report of the situation. The town is built upon a knoll of basalt, and there is no good water to be got. They have delved and delved in vain. People have taken to drinking of the foul water of the shrunken stream which creeps round the base of the knoll, and sickness is abroad. He leads the way to the only green spot in the place, the garden of a *gosain*, laid out with shrubs of lime and orange. A servant is carefully moistening the roots of these with a muddy liquid trawled from the bottom of a deep shaft, built round with masonry. The garden lies on a kind of terrace, below which, at a fall of some twelve feet, the ground slopes away towards the stream. At the base of the scarp the slope is pierced by five or six wells. Round the mouths of these are seated clusters of women in attentive silence. Their silence and the cords they hold in their hands give them the air of anglers waiting for a bite. A nearer view shows that the cords are attached to vessels of brass, and that they seek, by patient waiting on the dribbling springs which issue from fissures in the rock, to get these vessels filled. A

weary waiting it is. Farther down the slope, men are drilling the rock with steel tipped bars, and shattering it with quarry hammers in an almost vain battle with the niggard earth for the liquid treasures she hides in her crannies. Even as they labour, women press about them with water vessels and suffer not a drop to be lost. An indescribable melancholy is spread abroad by these scenes. The iron ground all aglow from the glare of the afternoon, sends up a sickening fume. Over the town comes that choking, musty breath of exhausted day which exhales like a pest from every sunbaked hamlet in the land.

It is like the air of a crater. Away, the place is accursed !

Is not this a "grisly sweven ?" And the second is like unto it. *Sweven the second.*—The blaze of midday is on the hills. They are flat-browed, steep-sided hills covered with long coarse grass, and studded with gaunt-limbed trees. The boughs of these are straggling, and the sparse foliage gives but little shade. Here and there, a bare white bole with wan leafless branches, stands like a burnt-out candelabrum or a *memento mori* skeleton in a company of cynics. The bleached herbage forms a strange grey carpet which throws up the glare and glistens far away between the tree-stems. Thickly strewn in it are boulders of black basalt, rusty-hued pebbles, and split nodules of white quartz. The pebbles seem to be trying to crowd the grass out; and on the side of every steep ravine they gain their end, and climbing or descent is hard indeed. As the stones rattle down, a startled panther bounds up the opposite acclivity, and is lost to sight in an instant. He has been to look for water at the bottom of this stony glen. There is but a foul puddle where the last issue of the spring ebbed away. By the side of it is the skeleton of a buffalo. Nowhere in this rocky wilderness is there any fount of water to be found. The heat is intense, the constant cooing of the omnipresent dove, the chatter of the jay, the distant jarring note of the peacock, are sounds that by their monotonous repetition seem to make the

solitude more bitter. The acid, mordant juice of the berries which hang in yellow clusters on the *oulah* tree, relieves the parched mouth for a time. Shortly, the burning thirst returns. With delight the exhausted traveller hails the sight of a cluster of huts, standing on a smooth bit of open ground which the descent of a gully reveals. He tastes in imagination the joy of a draught of milk. *Alas, the huts are empty ! The hamlet is deserted. The herdsfolk who inhabited them have gone northward, with their cattle, in search of pasture. In one of the cabins of the *rancha* the traveller sinks to sleep, and dreams that he is horribly imprisoned in the great crater of the isle of Hila.

“SANS SOUCI.”

I.

WHILE the peasant sows and the fair breeze blows
 And cloudlets fleck the blue,
 With the antlers near of a slaughtered deer
 And a flask of amber brew ;
 Let my limbs be laid in a mango's shade
 Or under the languid gleam
 Which entangled plays 'mid the clasping sprays
 Of a fairy-fingered Neem.

II.

Not a care can float o'er the magic moat
 Which the bright day round me flings,
 Nor a *dak* will come with its weary sum
 Of official questionings ;
 Not a rogue will pray for place or pay,
 Nor a nasal reader drone
 Of a thief untried or a dog that died,
 Or a witch with a magic stone.

III.

For the courts are far, and the bold sowar,
 Though he ride like a Deloraine,
 Will not be espied on the swart hill-side
 Till morning breaks again ;
 And the whispering glee of the siris tree
 Repeats that in yon black tarn
 Where the choked stream states, and the pad's hoof fails,
 Fate has toppled my *Misl-khwan!*

THROUGH TREASURE-TOWN TO TREASURE ISLE.

It is called, they say, the Treasure-Town because, in old days, a *kumaishdar* lived here, and the Government dues flowed into a treasury which was under his supervision. It is still a large town, though not so noteworthy for treasure as formerly. It has new features not belonging to those days of ill-employed lucre—*pucca* drains, a roofed market annotated on the brow with its builder's name and its cost in rupees, a post office like a geometrical puzzle, and a serai that may be mistaken for the court-yard of a gothic castle. Also, a fort converted to a novel purpose, that of keeping in its garrison as prisoners from the world, instead of keeping out the world from its garrison. Inside the high and narrow archway of red stone whose spiked wooden doors fold back against a weathered bastion, on the one side, and a sallow curtain-wall on the other, appear the blue uniform of a turnkey, the tiled roof of a work-shed, and three plantain shrubs set arow to please the jailor's eye. From the battlements, one sees far and wide over a level plain studded with trees and broken in places by a few abruptly rising hills. A long, red road runs straight through the midst. Along this road we had come—a party of pilgrims in search of the picturesque, and doing our pilgrimage, so far as there was carriage way, in a carriage. Hitherto the picturesqueness had been small

—nothing more than what the vista of green boughs along the red track, with the blue of the sky above them and the fainter blue of the linseed blossom gleaming from the fields beneath, afforded. But at one place we had reached a broad river, or rather the bed of a broad river, for the stream had dwindled to a narrow channel, leaving tracts of white sand on each side of it. There had not been much picturesqueness in this alone, but a freak of nature had cast up certain rocks of an ashen hue in a confused pile amid the sand, and suffered certain grasses to wave soothingly in the crevices; and on the precipitous bank of the further shore the art of man had raised a bell-roofed temple. So old and musty-dark was it, that the people of these parts averred it to be the work of *devs*. The river slipped over its sandy shoals in such a quiet fashion, that it was only when the ferry boat received us that we were conscious of its being there. Even then, our progress was so equable and so void of disturbance that one might have deemed it a river of sleep, wherein the submerged sand-dunes were fleeting dreams. A long train of grain-carts, red from the road, came down over the glistening shore and drove axle deep into the water. Funereal *dongas*, in pairs, slipped before and behind each laden vehicle, and shipped it from bank to bank, as the Egyptian water-hearses carried the dead of yore. But the shouting of the carters was anything but dolorous. Nor was there ought suggestive of Charon's prototype about the toll-taker. Perhaps the smeared fakir who stood beside him and begged, with a grin worthy of Grimaldi, for money to bear him on a pilgrimage longer than ours, might have stood for the character. Let not the unbroken file of water-carriers be forgotten—women in blue *saris* with bright brass vessels on their heads, passing up and down from the town that lay behind the temple, and unconsciously illustrating the deep disregard for sanitary rules which pervades the native mind. They filled their *gunds* just below the washing slabs, wherefrom the sound of sorely

threshed garments came mixed with the chatter of the laundresses. Such considerations as these, however, are apt to mar one's memory of the picture ; and as our chief business was with the picturesque, I leave them, and pass beyond Treasure-Town towards the Isle of Treasure. The ceaseless tinkle of bullock bells, the dusty film thrown into the air by the sluggish files of rice-laden carts, came with us monotonously while the red road lasted. A weight of drowsiness seemed to rest upon bullocks, bells, and cartmen all. The bells jangled slowly, the bullocks plodded musingly, and the drivers barely roused themselves from a lotus-dream to prod their cattle from the way. As the shining *palas* trees of the jungle closed in upon the besmirched mangoes of the avenue, we welcomed our approach to the wild. The rest of our journey was over stony tracks, accessible only to the *tanga*, the *tonjon*, and the elephant. Splendid mohwa trees lent a dignity to the surrounding scrub, and every village we happened on possessed a pride of mango, tamarind or peepul boughs. Mostly Gond villages, distinguished for well-leaped walls, fenced enclosures, and ugly women. In their neighbourhood, closely-packed sugarcanes thrust their tufted heads over bamboo palings ; and rice-fields, white with stubble, played cross purposes with patches of wheat. Now and again, we caught the distant gleam of a lake or *jheel*, or a flock of white paddy birds told of its presence. The *tanga* had a bad time of it, but the *tonjon* and the elephant went along at a goodly pace. The whinnying mustangs of the malguzars frightened the elephant into a faster swing ; and the ruck of the village-folk got winded, or dropped their shoes in vain pursuit. In this country of tanks, the talk was of tanks ; and breathless patels shouted their grievances about embankments. One man proposed to submerge a dozen acres as coolly as if he were talking of watering a cabbage bed. More is expected of a person riding upon an elephant than of a horseman ; in the same way that the latter is preferred in salutation to a pedes-

trian. If he cannot scatter gold, he should scatter silver ; if he cannot scatter silver, he should scatter flowers. Having neither gold, silver, nor flowers, we scattered fair speeches. The people seemed grateful. They had a surprise for us. What appeared to be the rocky spur of one of the abrupt hills which are grouped picturesquely about the country, proved to be the bund of a tank. Climbing it, we saw before us a wide sheet of water, blue as the heavens, and gently ruffled by the breeze into tiny waves which plashed musically against the stones of the embankment. The sweep of the further shore was dark with trees, save for a narrow band of withered grass at the water's edge which shone like yellow sand. The effect of the view upon our spirits was as that of the sea upon a traveller tired of the downs.

We could have sat upon the bund for hours. But not yet was the time of rest. By more rugged hills, displaying that amphitheatric tendency which is so favourable to the formation of lakes, and over whose wooded sides were scattered certain leafless trees, whose silvery rinds showed here and there like grey hairs in a shaggy head, we came at length to the glade where our camp was pitched. A few paces from the tents was a second surprise—another and a larger lake, curiously hemmed in from observation (till the observer was close upon it) by the rocky ridges which sloped down to its margin. These ridges were divided into individual bluffs and promontories, so distinct and yet similar in feature as to have won the local name of the "Seven Sisters and their little Brother." The jungle with which they were clad came down to the water's edge, without any intervening belt of sand or sward. The water was smooth as glass. About the centre was a small rocky island, with half-a-dozen trees upon it. At the nearer end, the eldest of the sisters rose to a tall peak, the equal curves of whose opposite slopes gave it a volcanic appearance, which the foliage from base to summit belied. A grassy bank, shadowed with

tamarind, peepul, and *anjan* trees, and dominated by the tagod-like heads of curving palms, ran from the foot of this peak to the shore on which we stood, but was separated from us by the overflow of a low weir of russet coloured boulders. In the centre of this was a rude flood-gate in the form of an arch. The escaping water glistened over the stones and made a pleasant murmur. Some *dhimars* were setting lines near the sluice and binding *dongas* together, against the contingency of our going afloat. We at once determined upon three things; *firstly*, to be industriously idle upon the shaded bund; *secondly*, to do what we could in the way of sketching the scene with pencil or pen; *thirdly*, to go afloat on *dongas*, and paddle round the Isle of Treasure.

It is not for me to describe the progress of being industriously idle. It is too well known. I have only to say that the margin of the lake afforded special advantages for the pursuit. The air was mild and soothing; the broad silver bosom of the *talao* suggested the two ideas of expansion and quiet which are necessary to secure mental repose; the fishes were given to occasional leaping; and the voice of the dove was heard in the woods. If there was any interruption, it was from a silver-haired monkey biting at *palas* leaves behind the bank, or from the slightly strident cry of the *coolen*. As for the sketching, it went off fairly enough, but for the tendency to leave off doing anything at all. Personally, I have no scruples about doing nothing; my policy in holiday times being one of masterly inactivity. If there were more faith abroad in the world, the profit, I think, to be derived from passivity would not be so underrated as it is. People inhale fresh air with a ready enough perception of the good it does them, but they rarely seem to appreciate the fact that the inhaling of scenery by the eye is equally beneficial. The swallowing of ozone is a good thing, but the absorption into the memory of grateful images, is surely as good, if not better. By the one act, the

body is fortified against diseases, by the other, the mind is fortified against irritation. Whenever, for example, I am in a bad temper, I shall project upon my retina the memory-picture I possess of Nowagaun Lake, and the sedative effect will be like that of a whiff of *virginia*. Leaving philosophies of this kind for the third act in our resolves, it remains to be told that when the slanting rays of afternoon permitted, we got on board the miniature *Castalia*, formed for us by the *dhimars* out of two dug-outs and a charpoy. We were slowly paddled across the lake. The Seven Sisters shone in new colours—purple on the shadowy side, and green and brown in the sinking light. Before our double keel, silver-scaled fishes scudded in diverging shoals. They apparently used the water as a spring cushion for their flexed tails. As we drew near the little islet which has gained its name (*Mal doongri*) from a traditional deposit of treasure there by the benefactor of mankind who made the *talao*, grave water-birds, plumaged in black and in white, flaunted slowly off it, and a snake-bird came rapidly round a corner upon us, like a submerged torpedo-launch with only a funnel neck showing above the wave. The islet was apparently a cairn of granitic boulders, resting on the top of a submerged hill. Within a short distance of it, there stood up from the water the bare tops of two dead teak trees, whose roots were fixed far below in the soil where they had grown. The only connection with the past which could console them in their forlorn condition, was the perching of birds upon their boughs. The sun sank behind the hills; and as the glow died out of the sky, a reflected silver of twilight seemed to shine from the lake into the heavens, and a ghostly mist crept along the shore. The beacon-light upon the landing stage was happily suggestive of the camp fire.

THE ISLE OF TREASURE.

Two fishermen's *dongas* lashed together,
 Five dusky Gonds for a paddling crew—
 And over the lake in the clear cold weather
 To the Isle of Treasure, we softly drew.

II.

Seven sister hills and a rugged brother,
 Wimpled in green and stoled in brown,
 Smiled each to each as the mère, their mother,
 Rippled her brow with a flying frown.

III.

Bright fishes sprang from the wave in wonder,
 Bright sunbirds glanced in the woodland screen ;
 And stark and bare the still deeps under
 The boughs of trees long drowned were seen.

IV.

No gold was there in the isle of Treasure
 No silver hoard in its shade found we—
 But a calm delight in the lake's wide leisure
 And two white cranes on an Imlee tree.

THE GAULIS.

WANDERING among the jagged spurs of the Satpura range, where the trap-plateau becomes the gathering-ground of the streams which feed the Godavery, the dry and dusty traveller comes often upon a curious clearing. The flat back of one of the basaltic monsters which lie off what may be called the coasts of the main rocky ridges, is worn as bare and hard as that of a river-horse. The trees which skirt the clearing are stript of leaves. There is a thin layer of compost over the ground. Comminuted as fine as powder, it yet bears no her-

bage; and the visible dint of hoofs explains at once its origin and its barrenness. At the first glance, one takes the clearing to have been the halting place, during the monsoon, of a band of those bold-mannered masters of pack bullocks and high-hooded wives, who go by the name of *Bunjara*s. A second glance shows that, on the further border, there are permanent structures which these wanderers never erect—a medley of thatched huts with pens attached. The walls of the huts are merely sticks and wattle: and the pens are simply rectangular dispositions of posts and dogs.

A few scantily-clad and rough-featured women and children are about the premises. One recognizes a Gauli “heti” or haylot.

Who the Gaulis originally were, and whether the pastoral people who now bear their name are descendants of the half-mythical clan who indulged the whims of the infant Krishna, it is not the place here to inquire. The Gaulis of to-day keep no memories of their origin, and are content to live and thrive as breeders of cattle and dealers in dairy produce. A sketch of their way of dealing with their stock may not be uninteresting.

Supposing it to be evening when the traveller reaches the “heti,” he will find the pens empty, perhaps, as described. The buffaloes have started for the depths of the forest, and the kine have not yet returned. On the trampled mud margin of a streamlet not far from the eminence, he meets the herd of cows loitering homewards. They are shapely and well-knit animals, though not distinguished for size. The prevailing colour is white, with here and there a dun. A Gauli, with a stick in his hand and a coarse blanket round his shoulders, saunters in the rear. The multitudinous tinkle of their bells is heard far down the paths of the jungle. Not many paces onward, he comes upon the out-going drove of buffaloes. The sight of these ponderous specimens of the familiar beast of

burden of the country fills him with a mingled sense of admiration and of absurdity. Their huge chests, their long, recurved horns, their length of back and strength of limb, excite his wonder and approbation ; but the awkward set of the neck, the slow, rolling gait which gives continual suggestion of going down hill, and the vacant look of the pale-hued eye set in the dark hide, are provokingly laughable. " It would be no laughing matter, however, to bear the brunt of an attack from any one of these apparently mild monsters. They follow now the Gauli who has charge of them as quietly as goats do the goat-herd, but woe to the man or beast who lays violent hold on that herdsman ! They have been known to trample under their hoofs both bipeds and quadrupeds who offended in this way. Cows, like sheep, will front a foe ; but they do so tremblingly, and not in the confidence of valour, as do these clumsy cousins of the kson. Wrapped in his blanket, their attendant sleeps by night on the ground in the heart of the forest, fearless of prowling tigers or panthers. The buffaloes graze in a circle round him ; and when the pasture of the spot is exhausted, the bull who leads the herd arouses the slumberer with a thrust of his snout. The night is their grazing time, because, with all their seeming toughness of hide, they are extremely sensitive to the attacks of certain insects which swarm by day ; and they are rarely sent abroad at noon without an armadillo coat of cowdung from neck to rump. Returning to the "heti," the traveller makes inquiries as to the uses of the respective herds. He is astonished to learn that the buffaloes supply the dairy, and the cows are kept only for breeding purposes. He is in the rearing-ground of the famous "Berari" bullocks, whose speed and endurance as draught cattle for the light cart of the country are prized wherever they are known. The bull-calves are early separated from their dams, and driven, as soon as they can travel, to one of the weekly marts near the line of railway. There they fetch prices ranging from Rs. 30 to

Rs. 50 a pair, if they are weanlings, and from Rs. 70 to Rs. 150 a pair if they are full grown. The buffaloes are productive of yet more profit. It is from these secluded and undomestic dairy farms that Bombay draws much of its supply of ghee, and not a little butter also. The agents of wealthy ghee-dealers inhabiting towns upon the railway, have their posts in this and that "heti," where they collect quantities of buffalo-butter, clarify it in large cauldrons, and store it in barrels, for transmission to head-quarters. Wooden trunks are used for the transport of the butter upon the backs of bullocks, over roads impassable by carts. Some of it is packed in baskets, and sent in its natural state to Bombay. There, if it has not turned rancid on the way, it is whipped up with water and tinted with saffron, until it assumes the consistency and appearance of cow's butter. Thus, the progress of civilization in rear of the iron horse has linked the plain dealings of this forest people with the chicanery of cities. Unconscious of such tangled results, they quietly prosper; having only two enemies to fear, the aggressive cultivator, and the zealous forest conservator. There are limits to the advance of the former, who only pushes his plough where the crumbled trap has accumulated in the nooks and hollows of the barren hill; but the latter holds ever over their heads the sword-like threat of exclusion for their cattle from every slope or glade where a teak sapling is rooted.* There are stories among the

* The Gaulis maintain that their herds do little damage to trees; but a glance round the plateau on which a "heti" is perched will refute their arguments. It is true that the trees in the neighbourhood of the hamlet are commonly of the little valuable *palas* kind; but there are sweeter leaves than this shrub bears in the forest. In the months of May and June the herdsman has difficulty in finding bladelets of any nourishment for his cattle under the longest grass tufts in the inner-most recesses of the hills; and *binola* and linseed cake, alone, will not keep them in vigour. Most owners tide it over with the loss of a beast or two, whom weakness has brought to their knees. Once fallen thus, and caught where it lies by the chills and damp of the monsoon, an animal rarely rises again.

Gaulis of times of trial, when some opinionative local officer shut up the available jungles in the dryest months of the year, and the starved beasts died by scores : and they foolishly fear that the like disaster may some day again befall them. But the better-informed can tell them that their alarm is groundless ; that the plentiful production of good cattle and good ghee is as much an administrative end as the conservancy of teak poles.

The two objects can be pursued together : the cattle being kept to the rugged, but grass-clad uplands, and the teak nurseries to the lower glades and *jheels*. Climbing to the table-like summit of a neighbouring ridge, to gain a far-stretching view over reserved woodland to where gleam the white bungalows by the railway, the traveller consoles himself with this thought. All the varied green of the forest is flecked with the patches of silvery bronze, where the frayed and banner-like leaves of the teak hang in faded magnificence on their light boughs. In the sparse openings in this wide expanse of foliage, herds of cattle are quietly grazing.

ON TOUR.

FORTH we fare at break of day—
All the air is cold and grey—

II.

Scored and rutted with the rain
The Bombay road divides the plain !

III.

Monkeys in the tope-trees squatted
Cross themselves like priests besotted !

IV.

Naked Brahmins cower and shudder—
“Save us from the cold Nerbudda!”

V.

Rigid is the peepul tree
And still as frost the fine imlee!

VI.

“Come, friend!” the fingered mangoes wave—
And sunlight strikes the Mahadev!

VII.

“Now which way lies this squat Ponri
Where our steeds may baited be?

VIII.

Where our camels couch, and where
Our well-pitched tents in order are?”

IX.

The Kotwal through the brush-wood springs
And us to a *bageecha* brings.

X.

Two-poled tent and *shamiyana*,
Pal and small *barwarchi-khana*!

XI.

Smart *sipahis*, tired *khulassies*,
Half-a-dozen spry chuprassies!

XII.

Atta, *dal*, and *goor* for sale
Minded by a *baniya* pale—

XIII.

Dhers with eggs and (both legs lethered)
Murgis plucked and *murgis* feathered!

XIV.

And heard with plaintive bleat afar,
A bakri from the Malguzar!

OPENING A BRIDGE.

AN iron girder-bridge of two spans, resting on high piers of sandstone, a coat of glowing red paint over the metal trusses and tie-beams, and a tinge of yellow running through the grey of the masonry. Underneath, is a shallow and murky stream, inertly feeling its way between mudbanks, deserted even of wader-birds, and disturbed only a couple of naked coolies in the act of proving that dirty water washes clean. On each hand stretches a sparsely-cultivated country, where one or two trees, some straggling shoots of green *palas* and patches of stunted but ripening corn, faintly assert the presence of life amid an otherwise death-like waste. A noon-day glare and glow dwells wrothly on the bare plain, and gives a fiery life to the red girders.

The bridge, in this circumstance of heat and bareness, does not seem at home; it looks uncomfortably conscious of its strangeness to the surroundings. Were it rid of its too conspicuous festal jerkin of scarlet, it might perhaps be more easy; but it has no resource save to lie sullenly in the shine, like a burly craftsman whom his friends have befooled into uniform and a trade's holiday upon a barren moor. In the centre of the iron way stands a lady with a long-handled hammer in her hand.

The bridge which crosses Giall's stream is guarded, one knows, by an armed warderess, who questions the ghosts as they go down to Hela's realm. The country here is sad and sere enough to be the high road to that melancholy region; but these arches which span the water are not of gold, and the figures which throng the road-way have a gay and mundane air about them, and step with a weighty step. The armed lady strikes a wooden wedge with her hammer, driving it to its function of firmly fixing a rail in its iron cradle; the loiterers on the bridge step aside into the safe recesses

which crown the bastion-like piers; and a mighty rumour is heard approaching. Perhaps Hermod the fleet-footed is coming from Valhalla upon the great horse Sleipner. Now will the fair watcher of the passage step out and say—

“ Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse,
Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Giall's stream
Rumbles and shakes? Tell me thy race and home.”

But if there be a visitor at hand from the divine halls of Asgard, he does not ride Odin's charger, but stands with the spectators on the bridge; and See! there is not one fiery steed but four, and their riders are ungod-like mortals. The order is to come “full speed,” and the big *cavalli* fulfil the behest with a noble enthusiasm. There is a shrilly neigh; and then, with snortings loud and fierce, they hurl themselves forward on the track. The ground quivers. There is a scent of battle. These huge and fiery war-horses have challenged to a trial of strength the burly craftsman who lies waiting in his scarlet jerkin. With a shriek and a furious clangour they are upon him, and while we dreadfully expect to see him marred and ruined by the shock of their onset, lo, he takes them in the hollow of his hand, and lightly passes them from shore to shore! The baffled monsters give out a cry of rage, but the unexhausted impulse of their charge carries them helplessly away. They are curbed by their riders and brought meekly back to the place whence they started. They are once more engines, no longer war-horses. With their return to sober industry, it is time to strip off the garb of metaphor. The people on the bridge prove their solid humanity by becoming hungry. They speak of the fact to one another. The engineers take down their tripods, and put away the instruments with which they have been observing the behaviour of the iron girders in the time of trial just overpast. The bridge is declared “open;” and the lady who wielded the hammer drives

the first train across. Into this train get the hungry ones, and are carried forward to one of those breakfasts which impose themselves upon all bridge-openings like orange blossoms upon the celebration of marriage. The programme of the day is not thus exhausted ; the bridge that has been formally delivered over to traffic leads to a mine; it is proper to go and look at the mine. Some of the party consider it proper also to go down the mine; but the less adventurous visitor contents himself with peering timidly into the grim and murky shaft which seems to descend to the earth's mysterious centre, and whence the smoke of a draught furnace curls pungently up. There is much to interest him above ground. The huge drum, with its coils of wire rope, whereby the miners' cages are lowered; the dial plate with its revolving index finger, showing the position in the shaft of the ascending or descending cage; the slowly-swinging cranks of the huge pumps which discharge a rivulet of water raised from dark depths. There is a jerky, groaning sound as the pistons rise and fall, reminding him of the ejaculatory remonstrances of a kneling camel whose load is being heavily piled. The quick and silent action of the dial-index is suggestive of far more intelligent resource. The observer is inclined to fancy that the dumb monster, whose finger language is so ready, could tell him many more things about the persons who have gone down into the pit, if it tried. It might signal how they were feeling—hot, exhausted, stifling, or in syncope, instead of simply ticking off perpendicular yards. But its masters have not provided it with a sufficient alphabet. He leaves the engine-room with a great respect for the cultured drum-engine, and with a feeling of subdued compassion for brute-pumps.

A special train carried the visitors homewards. In India a special train is not like special trains in other countries. It is special in occasion only, and not in speed. Ungenerous traffic-managers, with an eye to business, play tricks upon it.

The special starts gallantly, but is tripped up by artful telegrams, which lie in wait for it at unsuspected stations. • Station-masters, egged-on by these telegrams, cruelly prefix a long row of ought-like wagons to the decimal digit of the passenger-van. Thus diminished in appreciable worth, the latter trundles tediously along, and never sees it bourne till the sad-eyed midnight has placed an opiate hand on the weary traveller's brows.

THE INDIAN DRUM.

I.

Does a Rajah march
 Or a ryot wed—
 Do the torches arch
 Their light o'er head,
 Where silks are worn
 And bracelets glance,
 Where gods are borne
 And dancers dance ?
 What music leads
 The festive throng—
 What magic speeds
 The rout along ?

II.

Is it the blare
 Of the tube of brass,
 The flute-blown air
 Or the cymbal's clash ?
 Is it the shriek
 Of the gusty pipe—
 The wind-bag's squeak
 In the Minstrel's gripe ?

Ah, no!—less shrill,
More loud than these
Are the notes that fill
The eastern breeze.

III.

From the close bazaar,
From the dusty street,
From lanes that are
For life unmeet,
With a hoarse reply
To the player's skill,
While the horn's notes die
And the pipes are still,—
What rustic noise
Do I hear come?—
'Tis the blatant voice
Of the Indian drum!

MOONJ.

MEETING one or two dignitaries with whose presence I was accustomed to associate much of what is grand in the law, and admirable in administration, hurrying homeward like strayed revellers from a classic feast, with garlands of roses about their necks and gyves of jessamine on their wrists, I respectfully asked for an explanation. They hurriedly pointed to a huge booth hard by, erected within the court-yard of the Rajah's palace, and passed on their way like men bent on overtaking an hour that has escaped them. Marvelling, I turned my steps to the court-yard. The walls of it were covered with rude frescoes done in dark outline, and representing mostly tigers in all the heraldic positions,—rampant, couchant, passant. The arched gateway was thronged with loiterers and

persons passing in and out. From among the crowd stepped forward the august and gray-haired seneschal of the palace, and took me by the hand and led me in. I found myself in a tabernacle of mats, lofty and spacious, dignified with tall pillars, and gay with gauzy drapery. From the roof hung many lamps of glass, and every pillar was swathed in tissue paper. The area was crowded with Hindu visitors in their best cotton attire, but in the centre was a clear space, laid with a white foot cloth, where stood a table with vessels of *atar* and *pan*, two silver chairs, and a long sofa. In front of the sofa was a foot-stool. The seneschal made me occupy both sofa and foot-stool; and then led up many august persons of his family line, who each and all shook me by the hand. I turned to ask him what it all meant; he said it was "moonj." Not caring to trespass further on his kindness by closer inquiries as to moonj, I simply asked if this was all, or was there more to come? He responded by saying that I must see the young prince in his new Brahminical thread. He was on view, he added, in a chamber hard by. Again taken by the hand, the crowd parting to right and left of us, I was brought to the door of a small chamber like the vestibule of a temple, opening out of the hall. Within, I spied our Rajah sitting in half-nakedness, with his son in like nudity upon his knees. Both were much be-garlanded, and sat as motionless as art subjects. Behind squatted the officiating priest, with the pleased smile of a man who owns a camera obscura, and is drawing crowds. A dim and uncanny yellow light was poured over the group from a veiled *œil de bœuf* in the back-ground. I was about to press forward and shake our Rajah by the hand, when I was told that I could only look, and might not enter and touch. So I stared at him till he bowed. Pleased with this sign of vitality, I made many responsive salaams, and said it was the best *tableau vivant* I had seen for some time. In fact, it reminded me of the god Osiris with the infant Horus in his arms.

Chambers were continually shot off within; and strains of music from an invisible source enlivened the tedium of the royal pose. A haunting sense of hollow shows came upon me as upon Ida's suitor in *The Princess*. I moved away as in a dream, and was brought through the crowd to a little pavilion, where a tiny fountain spouted, and three fishes went sullenly round in a glass bowl. Numbers of Hindus were gazing gravely at this spectacle, and a weird feeling seized me that there was something in it which I could not see by reason of my feeble mood. I asked no questions, therefore, and came back to the sofa and the silver chairs. I was then decorated with the floral cordon and the gyves of jessamine. Hastily secreting the inevitable pan-leaf with its cloves and garniture in my trouser pocket, I summoned up courage for a last question of the seneschal, and said—"But what, after all, is moonj?" "This is moonj," he replied; "and if you come here to-morrow and the next day, it will be just the same" "And does the Rajah sit there just the same?" I asked, dreamily shaking hand with everybody within reach—"Just the same," he answered cheerfully. I went out into the sunlight with my garlands about me, like a heifer prepared for sacrifice. To this day moonj remains a mystery to me as great as that of Eleusis.

"FAR NIENTE."

DREAM yet awhile, break not thy quiet mood;
Although the stir of dawn is in the sky,
A star broods still. Rise not in hardihood:
Yon palm tree frowns at thee and bids thee lie.

II.

Why should'st thou haste to greet the rousing ills
 Of yester eve ? Day broadens into flame ;
 Its burning whisper moves along the hills—
 All will be ardour soon, and all things same.

III.

Is toil so sweet ? Has life no other song
 Than the dull, croon of the official mill ?
 What grist is ground of all thy labours long ?
 Or place or fame ? Lie still, poor fool, lie still !

IN THE GRAIN-SHEDS.

UNDERNEATH the bare and shallow bluff of Seetalaldi Hill, stands the Nagpur Railway Station. The rail comes in from Bhosawal and Bombay on the one side, and, on the other, trends out through the military cantonment of Kamptee towards those districts, rich in grain, which are called the Chattisgurh districts, and which it will ultimately penetrate and tap. Till then, the long train of carts, which make ceaseless jolt and jangle on the road from Raipur to Nagpur, will continue to bring wheat, rice, and linseed, over-much commingled with dust and chaff, to the depôts in the latter town, where buyers from Bombay do business. The powdery detritus of the road penetrates the sacking which holds the grain, and adds to the percentage of the foreign matter which fraud or negligence has admitted ; and often the unscrupulous cartman helps himself to a handful from the bugs, and makes good the vacancies with straw. Indian dealers may stomach this, but not the English trade ; and so the grain must be passed through the cleaning machine before it is shipped for England.

Come for a while with me out of the sunshine into the shelter of the long-tiled sheds which flank the roadway in front of the station. They are open on three sides, and a cool breeze blows through. One forgets the heat which makes a trembling haze about the white chimney stalk of the neighbouring cotton mills, and dwells thirstily on the blue waters of the talao which stretches citywards from the Station gates.

There is a throng of carts on the dusty road, and here is one which is being backed to deposit its load on the threshold where we stand. The bullocks are taken out, and the cart tilted; and the grain it held in loose busk is poured out on the floor. It is *gorani* or white linseed from the Nagpur district —broad of grain, light golden in colour, and shining as the wet sands at ebb. As the stream descends, the yellower seeds show like mossy patches among the white; and waves of light and shade alternate on the rippling pile of *ulsee*, which grows higher on the floor. Round about stand *kunbis*, dallals, weighmen, and on-lookers. Here is the jewelled Marwaree who bought from yonder well-clad middleman, who, in his turn, advanced the money which enabled the unclean cultivator, who stands by the cart, to bring his crop to market. The jewelled Marwaree is the broker with whom the firm which owns the sheds does business; and he stands here all the day, bargaining for an anna or more profit per *khandi*, and growing quietly fat in this shrewd, lazy fashion. The agent of the firm is quite in love with this *gorani* linseed, and ever and anon takes up a handful caressingly, and says, Would it were all like this! But, *n'importe*, they will mix it at Bombay with the darker qualities, and leaven the whole consignment with its creamy goodness. The measurers begin their task—shabby men with nimble fingers and sharp eyes, who squat on each side of the heap of grain, with *pylie* in hand. The *pylie* is an iron measuring-pot, like a tankard without a handle, but smaller at the brim than at the base. There is a beautiful uncertainty

about its exact capacity—the *pylies* used in the towns by the merchants who sell, being infinitely smaller than those used in the villages by the agents, or middlemen, who buy. There is a beautiful uncertainty, too, in the filling of the measure; for an adroit knave can pile the grain high, by slyly placing his finger on the brim. It is for this reason that two measurers are employed—one named by the seller, and the other by the buyer. They eye each other keenly and curiously—

“ As careful robins eye the delver’s toil,”
and when the buyer’s man puts his finger on his *pylie*’s rim, the seller’s minion shoves his thumb inside *his*, and so the count is squared. All the while, they chant a melancholy dirge, the burden of which is the number of *pylies* they toss into the open sack held by a third man, and it is wonderful with what rapidity their task proceeds. It is wonderful, also, to reflect that, by a local custom, the buyer pays them *both*. This linseed being measured and put into sacks, is ready at once to be loaded at the Station without further process; for the cultivators of this district winnow the grain twice before bringing it to market, and the percentage of chaff and dirt in it is, therefore, small. It is the Raipur grain which requires cleaning; the lazy ryots only winnow it once, and it has caught up much uncleanness, besides, on the road. In a neighbouring shed is heard the hum of the cleaning machines, hard at work on this brown Raipur linseed. Let us pass over to the shed and see the process. Many women are seated on the ground with *soops* or winnowing shovels, made of green bamboo, and shaped like a house-maid’s dust-pan, in their hands. The linseed is first roughly cleansed by being tossed in these shovels. It is then taken to the machine, which shakes it from sieve to sieve, and fans it hard with revolving shuttles before it shoots it out below. The air is filled with dusty particles blown aloft by the fans, and a residuum of dust and chaff gather below the perforate plane along which the grain descends to

its outlet. Mounds of this dust and chaff fill one end of the shed ; and it is only on looking at them that one fully realizes the amount of foreign matter which some grain-consignments contain. On examining the refuse, the mass of it is found to consist of the husks and fragments of the leaves and stalk of the linseed plants ; but, intermingled, are wisps of straw, stones, and earthy powder from the threshing floor and from the road. It is curious to think that, with every thousand bags of linseed painfully dragged two hundred miles and more from the harvest floor to this shed, come fifty bags of this rubbish, subtly, but not inseparably, intermixed. If the cleaning could be done at the starting-place, so much extra freight would, of course, be eliminated ; and doubtless when the Chhattisgarh railway passes through the Raipur district, the machines will "go to the front," as one may phrase it ; and give the crops of those parts a higher name in the market than they now bear. Meantime, let us be grateful to mercantile enterprise which plants its protest here against native carelessness and fraud in the practical form of these ceaselessly busy machines.

NAG-PANCHAMI.

A crowd

Circled the palace. Peons and police
 Buffetting, face and flank, the turbaned throng,
 Made forceful way. We found a postern-door
 (The palace-gate was barred against the mob),
 And entered—Lo ! a courtyard gay with guests,
 And round two sides an open corridor,
 And on the third, the Palace. Men and boys
 Clung to the roofs and raised an airy hum.
 Then came the portly Rajah, clad with gauze,
 Which showed the wrinkled riches of his ribs,
 And led us to the satin couch prepared.

It was the Feast of Wrestlers. In the midst,
 A clear space, strewn with sand and fenced with boughs,
 Centred the warring hopes of all the throng.
 For two stout Wrestlers, matched in throws and skill,
 From Poonah and the Punjab, champion men,
 Stripped for the prize and closed within the ring !
 There, like two surly bulls who scent a fray,
 They eyed each other hard, with heads low down,
 And tossed the russet sand on neck and flank,
 And strove with wary hands to plant the grip.
 The murmur of the anxious crowd within
 Rose like a river brawling o'er its stones ;
 And ever and anon a desperate man
 Burst through the Wicket in the palace-gate
 And mixed unbidden with the bidden throng !
 Then cried the easy Rajah—" Misri Khan ! "
 Bid the knaves stir themselves, and end the fray !"
 But they, remembering the bets that lay
 And wavered in the balance as they swayed,
 Turned a deaf ear and waited, breathing hard.
 Suddenly rose a cry—" The *Punjabi*
 Is worsted!"—and a million *cowries* moved
 In visionary change from pouch to pouch !
 But, lo ! he was not worsted, but he lay
 All his huge length, breast downwards, on the sand
 And kept his broad back bravely to the sky !
 There like a frog he puffed, and blinked his eyes
 In scornful ease, while he of Poonah strove,
 By pulling at his ankles and his thighs
 And levering with his knee upon his spine,
 To turn him like a turtle—all in vain !
 Thus for two hours they strove for mastery,
 And neither yet achieved the thing he sought—
 To lay his rival's back along the ground !

Then cried the fat-faced Rajah—" Misri Khan !
 Bring out the *pan* and *atar*!"—and he brought,
 And with fair smiles we took the things we loathed ;
 And being daubed with sandal and with scents,
 And noosed about our necks with jessamine,
 We sadly went, and left them wrestling still !

AT RAMTEK.

IN his seventh Avatar, Vishnu took the form of Rama ; and the outcome of it was that he made a hill sacred to his name, and a temple was built on the top. They plant temples in this country as oak-trees are planted at home—to consecrate the visits of the exalted. White and fair and sun-light-kist, the domes upon the hill of Rama are conspicuous from afar.

At the foot of the hill is a lake, rounded in by a steep, wooded vale, in shape resembling a horse-shoe. Pineapple domes stud the margin. Here, in the month of November, when the moon is full, come many traders from many parts, and set up their booths on the water's edge. Markets and religion have always been linked ; and the people who come to buy, come also to bathe. The bones of the departed, done up in neat packets, and carried on the points of spears, are tossed into the tank.

The steep stone stairs are painfully climbed. Rama gets wreaths of marigolds ; and the line of fakirs and gosains on either side, like a balustrade, get cowries and handfuls of rice. They whine out blessings and curses ; and here and there a troubadour strikes the untuneful strings. From Rome to Ramtek, from pulpit to puja-stone, you will find worship strangely connected with the climbing of stairs. The sense of energy expended for a moral object is doubtless of spiritual use. It must be remembered, too, that the elevation of the body gives

the soul a lift. Pride loves high places; and high places, if they belong to you, beget pride. If they do not belong to you, the sensation is slightly different. When breath is regained, the eye surveys the prospect with complacency, for life seems wider. Lest foolish humanity should exult too much, there is the thought of going down again, and the sight of the sacred fanes to temper its enthusiasm. So foolish humanity contents itself with thanking heaven that it has got to the top, and with taking such relish of the eye and of religious emotion as it can—

“The gods are happy,
They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes
And see, below them
The earth, and men.”

These reflections are perhaps inappropriate to the place; for they are born of secular freedom of thought, and this is the platform of priesthood. They would be unintelligible to yonder Marwaree, who is toiling up the steps with his wife behind him. He will have to spend a thousand rupees on feeding Brahmins.

“But hear ye this, ye sons of men,
They that bear rule, and are obeyed,
Unto a rule more strong than theirs
Are in their turn obedient made.”

And here is the Chief Commissioner coming down the steps. The steps are most fatiguing. They are not continuous, but fall from platform to platform. The feeling generated towards the close of the descent is one of stupor, interrupted by wakeful starts. Were it not for the presence of Hermia, Gracilla, and other ladies “the temptation to cut the trouble short” by a rush like that of “the steep precipitate rivulet to the sea,” would be overpowering. Arrived at the bottom, one feels as did the sick king in Bokhara—

“My head is burning, and a heat
Is in my skin which angers me.”

The high-heaped booths, with their quaint collections of brass, copper, glass, silver, cloth, sweetmeats, tobacco, and walking-sticks, somewhat soothe the harassed mind. It is reported that there are fifty thousand persons in the Fair and about it ; and certainly the throng and hum are considerable. There is no pressure, however, and no disturbance. A more orderly crowd could nowhere be found. The Chief Commissioner moves among them unattended with as much ease and freedom from curious following as if he were in Oxford-street. Better testimony than this to the patriarchal character of his rule he could not desire. The merry-go-round does not stop when he passes, the five-legged cow does not cease to draw, and the bangle-sellers hold on to the wrists of their customers. It is wonderful with what patient moulding of the hands the glass circlets are one after another induced. Trying on a kid gloves is nothing to it. The operation must be positively painful, as one judges when some white hands take the place of dusty ones, between the fingers of a grey-haired artiste in the profession. The fun of the Fair is not confined to merry-go-rounds and *lusus naturæ*. There are races, wrestling, ram-fights, and an agricultural show. Native gentlemen of a sporting turn do a little surreptitious betting, with the fear of the Chief Commissioner and of British morality before their eyes. The sport of wrestling is the one most appreciated by the multitude. The ring is thronged ; and the mango trees crack beneath swarms of eager climbers. A branch gives way ; and in the panic generated by the sudden noisy descent of the men above it, a score of trees are emptied as by magic ; *puggeries* and *doputtas* pouring like water to the ground. At the *renghi* races there is some want of intelligence. A native always seems a fool in the matter of getting out of the way of a rapidly moving vehicle ; and the crowd which forms across the race course beyond the winning post do not seem at all alive to the danger of their position. Every now and then a triumphant Jehu dashes into

their midst; and on one occasion a whole family, including the infant in arms, are bowled over like ninepins—much to their astonishment apparently, but little to their hurt. A Nagpuri offers so little resistance to impact that the wave of force goes over him, as the wind goes over wheat. The joy of these diversions is that the prizes are ready cash. The Chief Commissioner walks about like a happy caliph, with a vazier carrying a cash-bag in close attendance. For the love of five rupees, many a Mahratta attempts a thing before unknown to him—riding a donkey in a race. Several relatives attend the daring performer, and encourage him and his donkey with shouts and blows. Alas, his legs are not long enough, and he falls off. It is only the rider, with shanks fulfilling the description of Chaucer's pilgrim—

Full longe wern his legges and full lean,

All like a staffe—there was no calfy-scene—

who endures unto the finish, by reason of his toes being locked beneath the belly of his ass. He jumps down, in a delirium of joy, when he finds himself the victor, and the winner of several sequins.

At dusk-fall, between the fading of the sunset and the first faint glow of the “silver sister orb” above the dark shoulder of the valley, a native imitator of Brock sends up his rockets and fire balloons into the doubtful darkness of the sky. White-garmented spectators throng the slopes, the margin of the lake keeps its crowds, a weird veil of smoke-wreaths streams across the Fair. This strange people takes its pleasure quietly, and while the balloons become as planets in the vault of heaven and the exploded rockets scatter their sparks over head, there is little noise heard beyond a hum as of multitudes afar, the occasional tapping of a drum, and the wail of a song from the spirit shops.

HOPE.

A FIERCE haze throbs on the barren plain
‘And grasshoppers chirp of noon:
But hope says again that a mighty rain
Will come with to-night’s wan moon—
Night’s tearful, rack-blurred moon.

II.

A wind shall blow from beneath her throne,
And howl in the shrivelled trees;
And drought o’erthrown, with a piercing moan
Will die in the rushing breeze—
In the sobbing, balm-fraught breeze.

III.

The fair night-robe which earth shall wear
Is a garment of gleaming rain;
And tree and tare shall get drink to spare
And my life have its pith again—
Its marrow and pith again.

IV.

Their shadowy screens from the doors shall go,
And the restless punkah cease—
Oh, soon may the sun in his west be low
And the mother of night bring peace—
In her stormy robe bring peace.

PART II.



O F F I C I A L .



I.

THE realms of Poetry and Love are one!—
Wherever throbs a kindly human heart,
Wherever orbs the moon and shines the sun,
Wherever youth and hope together run,
Or time and sorrow drives those friends apart—
There Poetry, if not the Poet's Art,
Is born; and her sweet sense is to be won
By every man who plays a ruler's part!

II.

What is the ruler's part? To sternly shun
What smacks not of the forum and the mart—
To grind the mill till quite with toil fordone,
To see no glory in the moon and sun,
Nor ever quit the quern and muse apart?
If this were so, then vain the Muse's Art,
And, bare they apes or men, all hands were one
To every man who played a ruler's part!

III.

How shall we say, then, of this tropic sun
That he is foe to all poetic art?
Through Palm and Tamarind these whispers run
“Lift up thine eyes, Numeria's weary son,
Receive the bright day's message in thy heart!
Lone in the glowing plain, a prince thou art
Of mage-like power! Here poet's bays are won
By every man who plays a ruler's part!”

L'Envoi.

'Twas therefore that I lately said to one
Who blamed this land of Ind—“It is the heart
That errs!” A poet singing in the sun
Is every man who plays a ruler's part!

PART II. OFFICIAL.

FOUNDING A CITY.*

SIX OF US WENT TO FOUND A CITY. THE WAY WE WENT ABOUT IT, AND THE REASONS FOR OUR DOING IT, WERE AS FOLLOWS:—

The cotton interest is a growing one in these parts. The grounds of Old Monopoly have been trenched upon by Young Enterprise. Old Monopoly, fighting sturdily against the invader, has only wakened fresh eagerness in the foe. To show himself alive and fearless, and at the same time with some hope of transferring the scene of conflict to ground at a distance from his main position, Old Monopoly has schemed the establishment of a new mart. He has gone further; he has bought a piece of land, and sent engines there for his steam-press. Whereupon it behoves Young Enterprise to do likewise; it concerns the district officer to maintain the interests of Government in respect of the sale of sites; and it concerns a crowd of pushing *mahajans*, brokers, and *banias* that they should secure locations as near as possible to the destined market. So all these different interests took train one morning to Bridge-town; and I, being but too glad of an excuse for a holiday, went with them to play "Puck" to the lovers of commerce. It was quite plain that they were deeply in love with the well-dowered lady. Young Enterprise, who was unattended, pretended that he had no thoughts of her, and gave out that he was going to see a friend down the line. He clearly looked upon his adversary, who was a bluff, plain-

* Wardha District.

spoken person, as a kind of "Old man of the Sea," who would get upon his back and strangle him, if the opportunity were given. Old Monopoly, on the other hand, lost no opportunity of taking the measure of his rival's capabilities; and whispered gleefully to his two companions of the thriftlessness shown by the enemy in throwing empty soda-water bottles out of the carriage window.

Alighting on the platform, we looked around us with the proud consciousness of being about to do a big thing—of being the founders of what might grow to be a city—of being the pioneers of such civilization as attaches to the usages of towns. It is true that on the opposite side of the railway there were to be found the ruins of an abortive township which had been commenced amid anticipations similar to those in which we indulged; but we flattered ourselves that there was a difference in the conditions of the two undertakings. The enthusiasts who ran up a *serai* yonder, and, in the plenitude of their zeal for their new foundations, attempted to blow up the walls of the neighbouring mud fort, round which the villagers' huts resolutely clustered, were acting on a wrong principle.

They first builded, and then waited for trade to countenance their building. We, on the other hand, were but following the lead of trade, and about to align the positions which she herself had resolved to occupy. Our nascent township, therefore, was in a manner insured against the possibility of a premature decadence.

Spreading the map of the country upon the table of the waiting-room, we proceeded to plan the site of New Bridgetown.

At this point arose a dreadful doubt. Was the map of the country *correct*? It was of the utmost strategic importance to each of the rival wooers of commerce, that the ground to be occupied by them should abut upon the highway which she was sure to traverse; to wit, the road running from the rail-

way station into the interior. Was the position of that road correctly indicated upon the map? Old Monopoly had already, as mentioned, bought land here with a boundary coincident with the border of the highway as shown in the vendor's copy of the settlement chart; but somebody asserted that the road which existed in 1863 (the date of the chart) had long ago been ploughed over, and that the new track was some ten or fifteen paces to the left of it. Here was a discovery indeed! Old Monopoly looked as if a mine had been sprung upon him. One of his friends whispered that if that were indeed so, he, Old Monopoly, was literally "hoist with his own petard." Young Enterprise began dimly to descry as advantage. Both parties blew a flourishing point of war, and we hurried out to solve our doubts upon the ground.

A crop of jowarry had considerably hidden the pegs which demarcated Old Monopoly's acquisition, but he plunged manfully into the moist field and hunted them out.

When their position was found, it seemed indeed that somebody's assertion was true, for the boundary of Old Monopoly's newly-bought premises was not conterminous with the existing road. There was an interval of some ten paces between them. Whereupon he waxed wroth, and exclaimed that he had thought all along that there was a half-acre missing in the allotment he had purchased, and here was the half-acre that had been dropped. At the same moment it occurred to Young Enterprise that this half-acre was exactly the location which would suit him, and that no other would do as well. Simultaneously the bit of land was claimed as *nuzzool* by the district officer; and a man who had built a *kutcha-pucka* house upon the very front of the patch, and sunk a well along side, let his voice be heard as a trespasser with implied "leave and license," through the *laches* of the proprietor of the soil. Under these circumstances it is to be imagined that a warm discussion arose—warm as the sun which poured pitiless rays upon the group of

Europeans and the silent circle of red-puggried, uncomprehending natives. Indignation raised the language of Old Monopoly and Young Enterprise into oratory. By common consent the claims of the owner of the *kutcha-pucka* house were promptly extinguished.

"I will oust him at once," said Old Monopoly. "You will save me the trouble," exclaimed Young Enterprise. The district officer took the occasion to observe that if the trespasser based his title to remain on the *laches* of Government, he would have him understand that the title was no title—for *tempus non occurrit regi*. The man of the *kutcha-pucka* house cringed and retired. The field being thus left free to the other disputants, Old Monopoly asked politely to be informed why his rival could not be accommodated on the *opposite* side of the road? The latter stated the reason to be that another merchant had prospected that site, and begged, in his turn, to be informed why this half-acre was so particularly necessary to his excellent friend, and upon what ground he based his claim to it. "*Grounds?*" roared the other, "on the best of grounds; I was here before you!"

I explained to Young Enterprise that the gentleman looked upon the land as having become his by first occupancy, on the same principle that the Crown assumes sovereignty over unoccupied countries, *quod enim ante nullius est il naturali ratione occupanti conceditur* (as Justinian hath it); and that the argument wholly turned upon the point as to whether this was indeed *res nullius*. "As for what I want it for," added Old Monopoly, "you may as well know that I intend to build a bungalow here." "And I am prepared to support the gentleman's claim," said the district officer gravely. Whereupon Young Enterprise got upon a hillock and harangued us. "Is this," said he, in tones of impassioned irony, "your boasted jurisprudence? I put it to you, Sir, which of us two has in equity the better claim to this plot of ground—

the man who has already secured ample accommodation for his cotton-press, and now seeks to indulge in the luxury of a bungalow, or the representative of an important commercial firm, who, in the event of the premises on the other side of the road being taken up, is totally unprovided for ? And I may ask," he went on with a glance of haughty disdain, "who this gentleman is who asserts for himself such royal rights in advance of all others?" With this splendid apophasis, he came down from his knoll, and we stood silent under the effect of his eloquence. Old Monopoly was breathless with rage, but at last found utterance to grasp. "Fine logic, but the plot is mine for all that." "Under whose assurance?" snapped the other. "Away with thee, thou maker of Jewish bargains!" This was too much for Old Monopoly. "One must draw the line somewhere," said he to his companions, "and this young man to me entirely objectionable." And so, although we lingered about a little longer, the city could not get itself founded that day at all. Old Monopoly was sulky and retired to the waiting-room, where he looked moodily out of window. Young Enterprise (who dropped all animosity the moment the matter-of-business was out of hand) tried to coax his late adversary into a good temper.

He did not succeed; but an accidental remark of mine effected the desired end. Young Enterprise having changed his mind several times on a point of intention, I said to him, "I have scripture warrant for telling thee that unstable as water thou shalt not excel." "Hist," said Old Monopoly in my ear, "keep your pearls of wisdom to yourself, you are teaching him far too much, far too much."

And he was so delighted with his own merry quip, that he forgot his injuries and opened his tiffin basket.

THE DURBAR.

I.

THE chief was coming; a Durbar
 Was to be held. The Tahsildar
 Scented his fortune from afar.

II.

"By Allah! I will raise," vowed he,
 "Subscriptions for a pageantry
 And win myself an E. A. C*!"

III.

Thus scheming, he met Munna Seyt,
 A banker, yearning for the state
 Of Honorary Magistrate.

IV.

"Seyt Jee!" said he, "if you will lend
 Your purse's aid my zeal to mend,
 You shall be clothed with honour, friend!"

V.

Munna "bled" freely. Arches rose
 And banners flew: and not a close
 Was left offensive to the nose.

VI.

With painted pillars in a row
 A garden gleamed, where men did sow
 Much wheat, a rising green to show.

VII.

With shawls the destined hall was dim:
 School children learned a special hymn—
 God save the Empress-Queen and *Him!*

VIII.

Munna hoped highly. He had "bled"
Profusely. Loudly in his head
Rang words the Tahsildar had said.

IX.

The chief arrived, was pleased. A nod
Made the gay Tahsildar a god ;
And Munna almost grasped the rod

X.

Wherewith he hoped to softly slay
His debtors in a legal way—
(A sharp Mohurrir in his pay).

XI.

Then spake the chief : " O Munna Seyt !
The town's own council needs the weight
Of your ripe wisdom in debate—

XII.

The officers municipal
Will never gather in their hall,
But Munna Seyt shall have a call ! "

XIII.

He finished—and a heavy sound
Was heard that instant on the ground—
'Twas Munna, fallen in a swound !

XIV.

They picked him up and bore him far
By order of the Tahsildar—
And the chief ended the Durbar.

XV.

Then shortly from the Tahsili
He who had held the treasure-key
Went forth an acting E. A. C.*

* Extra Assistant Commissioner.

THE LAST HALF-HOUR.

THE last half-hour of the magisterial day is generally taken up with hearing the complaints which have been accumulating since noon. A little pile of stamped papers, scrawled over with the inelegant characters of the petition-writer, who sits outside the cutlerry door, represents the justice-demand of the hour. It is nearly always the same round of grievances; and that is a red-letter day on which the unscrupulous scribe aforesaid has not managed to distort a purely civil grievance into a criminal offence. He is an adept at the art of cooking up a fray out of a question of *meum* and *tuum*; and by the insinuation of a slap, he will bring within the cognizance of the Magistrate a matter of law which had else found discussion before the revenue officer or the Civil Judge. His cunning is assisted by the possession and study of a dog-eared copy of the Penal Code, or of the schedule of offences attached thereto; and he must be a pitiful fellow, indeed, if he cannot find therein a section which will apply to any tort, lesion, infraction of rights *in rem* or *ad rem*, or damage whereof there is a *remedium juris*. The numerical denotation of common offences which is popular with both police and public, is at the tip of his pen; and if he is in doubt at any time which is the appropriate number to scrawl at the head of a complaint, he jots down two or three of the likeliest, and, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. The woman who quarrelled and fought, after the manner of vixens, with her neighbour, is delighted to find that the latter's conduct can be labelled with such stigmatising numbers as 500, 504, 355, and 352; and the ryot whose plough has been stopped by an ejecting landlord thinks that he has got the full value of his notary's fee when he learns that it is a case of sections 341, 426, 447, and 506,—all in one. He is as much astonished as was M. Jourdan when he made that famous discovery about prose. He veils

his joy in a discreet modesty ; but there is an indescribable something in his tread and carriage when he deposits the precious paper of complaint on the Magistrate's desk, which seems to say—"There lies my battery, you will find it mounted with guns of metal, sir."

If there is anything which relieves the weariness of listening to and endorsing the monotonous repetitions of the last half-hour, it is indeed the observation of the tricks and eccentricities of the complainants. A glance at the presenter of a petition is often enough to inform the Magistrate of the nature of the document's contents ; and this, too, without there being any such conspicuous traces of injury as a carefully preserved blood-clot or a gaily-coloured bruise. This man, for instance, with the tears cleverly brimming from under his lids, who is so eager to be heard that the chuprassies can hardly restrain him, has probably been guilty of an assault upon a less fleet-footed adversary, and is anxious to get his version of the affair recorded before the other arrives. Yon *kunbi*, with the ox-goad in his hand, has got a tale on his lips, which begins with "*Maharaj!*" and ends with a plough-tail. His neighbour held the rod when he disputed with him about the common boundary of their fields ; and like the smith in King Henry VI., who called on the chimney to testify that Jack Cade was both king and brick-layer, he has brought it with him in proof of the truth of his story. The demure woman, who is unnecessarily veiling her face from the impartial eyes of justice, has, beyond all doubt, been turned out of doors by her husband ; and like "*Roy's wife of Aldivallock*," she would make her guideman "*wallock*" (or wail) with a rousing maintenance order which may drive him to writing her a document of leave and quittance. Then she will marry the man of her choice. It is thus that the miscellaneous jurisdiction of the Magistrate is made to include the offices of the Divorce Court. The position of an injured husband who

wants damages for the loss of his help-mate, is represented by this coal-black, broad-shouldered Gond, who so quietly puts down his paper and retires. His wife, while in search of employment in some distant village, has held herself out to be a widow, and committed bigamy by a *path* marriage with a more well-to-do man than himself. He is not shocked, or desirous of exacting the full penalty of the law; what he wants is to extort a price from the befooled bridegroom.

If the matters of complaint yield occasionally a certain entertainment from the incongruities of allegation and motive which they suggest, the appearance and conduct of the complainants, when called up for examination, are often more absurd. Sobs and a quavering voice are ready at command; and the appeal of the dishonoured man, whose social position has been ruined by the impact of a piece of cow's bone maliciously flung, would be really touching, but for the teaching of experience that all he seeks is money to pay for the caste-dinner that will restore him. The turmeric-painted bruises of the creditor who has fallen over his debtor's waterpots while on dunning intent, and thinks to turn the occasion to account by inventing an assault, affect him as borrowed plumes did the jay. He turns himself about to be admired, but is made speedily crest-fallen by an order to go and wash all that off at the cutcherry well. The acting of the old lady who, when come into the presence of law upon a trifling matter of trespass in respect of a party-wall, falls into a swoon, and will not by any means be lifted from the floor of the court, is more embarrassing than amusing. Other complainants, who have not histrionic powers to trust to, make up a telling tale in their own words, or adapt a formulated description of assault and battery which is supplied to them by the petition-writer. Thus a volley of slaps and buffets is ordinarily followed by a dropping fire of kicks and stick-blows, and culminates in the prostration of the attacked party, and a trampling on his person.

by the victorious assailant. In some vicinities, the ungifted complainant is always taught to represent himself as having become *behosh*, or senseless, through the violence of his adversary; but this is not the *dénouement* in fashion in other parts, where a dramatic rescue by the people of the neighbourhood is much more commonly described. It is in this way that a good cause is often marred by a backing of falsehood and exaggeration; and, as Lord Bacon puts it—"Justice cannot yield her fruit with sweetness amongst the briars and brambles, of catching and poling clerks and ministers." It is a pity that his opinion is not more closely followed in what he says as to the place of justice being "a hallowed place;" and that therefore "not only the bench, but the foot-pace and precincts and surprise thereof, ought to be preserved without scandal and corruption." In respect of petition-writers, this desirable result might be partly brought about by the refusal of permission to ply their trade within the court's precincts to any but certificated clerks.*

THE CUTCHERRY WELL.†

Two patient bullocks working at a well;
 Backward they plod and let the bucket droop
 Until the water brims it. At the cry
 And menacing jostle of the man who stands
 Between them and above them, they pace down
 The ascended slope and raise the water up.

* This course has now been adopted.

† The Persian wheel is not much used in the C. P.; the method of raising water generally employed is that described in these lines.

O'er the baked land in little ducts it flows,
 And glads the bursting cabbage, or again,
 Makes fresh and fair the ailing artichoke.
 Plantains look on in silence, and the plain—
 The great, bare plain—seems barer than before !

III.

'Tis thus that salaried justice in twin shapes,
 Civil and magisterial, yoked abreast,
 Toils ev'ry at the task of raising truth
 From out the well that hides her, and a wash
 Of limpid inference is poured abroad
 To cheer the exotic virtue and make rich
 The need and greed of India's tutored sons.
Statistique stands above them, and the pair,
 Fearing a thonged reminder, plodding, moil.
 All round, the land is barren, and no growth
 Of grateful honesty rewards their toil.

A MUNICIPAL ELECTION.

ALTHOUGH it had been proclaimed, by beat of drum, a full fortnight before, that the election would be held that day, the people obstinately refused to come to the poll. It was disheartening. After so many years of endeavour to acclimatize British institutions, after the liberal extension of a suffrage which Gladstone could not improve upon, after reading of grateful constituencies and their manful support of the civic opposition in other districts, it would never do to report having drawn a blank. The Municipal Secretary was ready in a snowy *dopatta* to count and record the votes; the ex-members were standing in a row in the verandah of the committee-room; and six electoral *chatties** (one for each candidate) were

* Earthen vessels.

flanked by a rupee's worth of *courries*.* The head constable (useful man) was at hand; and he was bidden to employ his influence and that of his satellites in bringing in from the high ways and by-ways a sufficiency of guests for the intellectual and moral banquet which the spirit of the times (aided by the district officer) had spread. He cheerfully obeyed. Meanwhile, the Honorary Magistrate fingered the *courries* and looked scornfully at the fat *Marwari* who had inscribed his name in the roll of *pettores*. The *Marwari* chewed *pán* furtively, and regretted the immoral ambition which had drawn him away from his chintz-covered ledger. As for the Secretary, he was also the head-master of the town school, had read of the ballot, and was complacently satisfied to stand sentinel over the apparatus of an institution which had been familiar to the Romans. Still, he was anxious that a certain member should lose his seat, because he had a scheme for putting a little money into his assistant-master's pocket, by giving the latter the execution of a survey of the town. The said member was opposed to the survey, as an unnecessary expenditure. Moreover, the vague definition of border-lines, which allowed him to brush his teeth on the bathing slabs in rear of his neighbour's premises without fear of ouster, was rather pleasing to him than otherwise. So they thought it over silently according to their lights. A hubbub announced the approach of the free and independent electors, prodded on by the constabulary. There were only twenty or thirty of them, and the *jemadar* felt bound to explain. Falstaff had not more difficulty in getting recruits. "The people will not believe that there is to be an election," he said. "They think it is all a dodge." A *dodge*—the glorious institution of local self-government through the agency of the ballot to be characterised as

* Shells, ordinarily used as money; but in this instance to be employed like the pebbles used as Roman trials, save that there were separate *urnæ* instead of differently coloured *calculi*.

a *dodge*. One felt inclined to be angry with that head constable for speaking so bluntly. Indignation being gulped down, it was more practical to ask him to develope his meaning. With a mollifying salute he was preparing to do so, when a constable in very short pantaloons, whose wrists had long ago said a bony adieu to his strained sleeves, broke through all ambiguities by exclaiming—"They think its pig-sticking you are after!" "*Pig-sticking?*" "Sir," said the Secretary, "a party of huntsmen came here a month ago and swept off the available males to beat the covers. The people do not care for that kind of work, although they are paid for it." He appeared to be telling a true tale, for the assembled voters wore a very crest-fallen air. It was emphatically explained to them that it was *not* pig-sticking which we were after. They were informed that it was now their proud privilege to choose the men who, for the next three years, should administer the funds of their town, should make the town's roads, the town's drains, the town's cleanliness. Not a drooping head was raised; no enthusiasm glowed in their eyes. The anti-survey candidate ventured on a remark. "The *Sirkar* is very good, and means it for your benefit." The idea flashed through the assembly. "Ah, Ah! *Sirkar ki khushi*; the *Sirkar* wills it for our good." At the tail of the crowd a burly oil-man shouted—"That man (pointing to the anti-survey speaker) always brushes his teeth in my back-yard; and the Honorary Magistrate will not listen to my petition against him." It was like letting loose a flood. Every body showed a grievance. Now was the time to rouse these down-trodden folk to a sense of their own power to remedy grievances, and to teach them the inestimable benefits of free institutions.

Vox populi, vox Dei—let the popular voice but make itself heard in the jingle of *cowries* and *chatties* (mofussilite for the ballot-box), and tyrants and violators of the rights of back-yard property would fall like Dagons to the ground. To this

effect the assembly was harangued ; but whereas the close of the address might well have been drowned in tumultuous applause, it had no other effect than to throw chilly silence over the meeting. The electors eyed the *chatties* and *courries*, but would have nothing to do with them. Who were they to commit themselves to acts of registry which might have damaging effect upon their peace and prosperity ? They were cravens—all. Even the oil-man was cowed. It was necessary to adopt the electoral machinery to the popular shyness, and to resort to the cruder device of a show of hands. Alas ! It seemed as though the sleeves of all were filled with lead, so slowly and hesitatingly were the arms upraised. Six hands for the Marwari, all of them belonging to humble debtors. The Honorary Magistrate and his colleagues were re-elected by an overwhelming majority, in the tale of which it is doubtful whether the six debtors were not included ; for, not to appear singular, they raised their arms with the mass. What a cheerful bustle of dispersion followed ! Then, when the last elector had left the premises, the nominees of a grateful municipality turned into their committee-room. They forthwith passed a resolution that the oil-man should be prosecuted before the Honorary Magistrate for keeping his premises in an unclean condition.

THE OLD MARWARI.*

I.

It was an old Marwari,
Came near his time to die ;
So sick was he and sorry
He laid his ledger by.
No thoughts had he of Heaven
Nought recked he e'en of hell ;
His nature's pious'leaven
Was to keep his *hisab*† well !

II.

His books were balanced neatly,
His *Punji khata*‡ showed
A big sum clear completely
Of everything he owed.
His kinsfolk hovered round him
Like vultures of the air,
But e'er a knave could sound him
He tricked them *with an heir*!

III.

“The old luck of my people—
I've no son of my own ;
But blithely springs the *peepul*
From a ruined tower of stone !
This lad whom now I credit
Shall take fortune from my side—”
He “booked” it as he said it—
Laid down the pen and died! §

* Money-lender form Marwar, in Central India.

† Accounts.

‡ Capital Account Book.

§ Among Marwaris the act of adoption is not complete till the son adopted has been duly “booked” to credit.

A DISPENSARY MEETING.

THE Collector has been trying to make our dispensary more of a popular institution. It has long been popular in the sense that people have freely resorted to it for medicines; but, hitherto, the persons thus advantaged have omitted to offer to the house of pharmacy any valuable return. As many of them are well-to-do, it is plain that the omission is due to their not having been properly invited to contribute. As for those healthy individuals who never stand in need of drugs, they cannot be expected to subscribe a *quid pro quo*, the *pro quo* being wanting. He is therefore finding them a *pro quo*. The privilege of self-government is with all liberal peoples a good equivalent for liability to rates and taxes; and he exhibits to the drug-abstaining townsmen (already educated by municipal freedom) the liberty they may enjoy of canvassing all expenditure by the mouths of special representatives. They are responding to his advances; and I do not remember a more fatiguing morning than that which we spent lately in haggling over the elimination of some worn-out hospital bedding. This haggling was a sign of healthy interest, and we were grateful for it, though fagged. Carrying the principle of self-government still further, he does not venture to assess contributions *ex cathedra*, but calls upon the respectable townsfolk in council assembled to fix each person's liability upon a consideration of his means. He also takes into account what may be termed the *appetitio medicinae* of the individual named; reviewing to that end the frequency of the latter's visits to the dispensary as testified to by the assistant in charge. The process of assessment upon this voluntary system is not without its humours, as the following notes may indicate.

We, of the dispensary committee, sit on chairs in the room we have dignified with the name of the public library ; and the public who have come to be assessed are accommodated with benches. Two of our number are not so used to chairs but that they sometimes forget the attitude for which these pieces of furniture are designed. The old Malguzar of this prosperous town, whom the changes wrought by time are daily driving into a more settled melancholy and a fonder attachment to a faded umbrella, draws up one leg under him in bird-fashion, leaving the umbrella, which supports his chin, to answer for the missing member to the company. The Naib-Tahsildar in moments of abstraction draws up both legs, and becomes temporarily a likeness of *Gautama Buddha*. The Tahsildar* knows better. He is a proud man ; and is careful to avoid any laxity of manners in the presence of a Mussulman ghee-dealer with tinted finger nails, who sits opposite to him. This rich *parvenu* is a man of sense notwithstanding ; and his tinted nails are his only foppery. He looks like a portly merchant-man ; and the small *Marwari* who sits in a huddled posture by his side, might pass for the bum-boat which brings him provisions.

Hadjee, Bora, is called from the benches to the public table. A pen is put into his hand. What sum will he be good enough to note down with that pen as his annual subscription to the dispensary ? Hadjee hesitates. He is a tall, thin man with a sallow visage, narrow, peering eyes, and a piping voice. He looks decidedly unhealthy. Reference is made to the Hospital Assistant. "Oh, yes ; he is a constant visitor—consumes many pounds of drugs every month." There is no doubt that Hadjee ought to come down handsomely. Voices (mostly Hindu) cry suggestively, "twenty rupees—twenty-five rupees!" Other voices (mostly Mahomedan) shout "twelve

* Native Deputy Collector.

rupees!" Hadjee peers nervously round the assembly; and with a grating laugh, as though it were a good joke, screeches "twenty rupees!—he, he!—how can I afford so much? I am a very poor man. Six rupees is all I can give." At this there is universal indignation. But Hadjee is stubborn, and laughs his forced laugh. The pen is taken from his hand. "Stop his drugs," says the Collector. The Hospital Assistant makes a note; and Hadjee goes back, murmuring, to his seat, with a look like that of a trapped lynx.

The next person who comes forward is a different style of man. Ithoba, Teli, has a fine broad chest and muscular arms, scantily draped by a soiled *dopatta*. He has carefully laid aside his gold bracelets and finger rings, but the massive girdle of silver chain-work about his waist relieves his otherwise poverty-stricken aspect. He tells the Collector that he got it cheap. The Tahsildar observes that this is a very well-to-do man; and that ordinarily he is well dressed in clean raiment, and sports many ornaments. The crowd on the benches evidently enjoy the jest implied in the oil-man's ingenious get-up. "But," says Ithoba, "I am *never ill*: I have never taken medicine in my life!" "Consider the virtue of charity!" exclaims the ghee-dealer. The oil-man does not quite seem to see it; but, nevertheless, being a good-humoured person, he makes a mark denoting his oil-press opposite a subscription of twelve rupees, and swings carelessly back to his place.

He is succeeded by one or two beggarly-looking fellows who have affected the same kind of disguise.

They are identified, however, as respectable citizens by the Malguzar, who croaks laconically from his resting place—"yeh acche admi hain!"

The deception being now understood, proves an unprofitable one to the mummers; for the public will not listen to their protestations of penury.

Here is a talkative cloth-seller, who insists on addressing the meeting in true oratorical manner, one arm aloft, like a Brutus of the theatre. "Hear me for my cause, &c." "Well, have done with it, and put down what you will, and so make room for a more likely man!"

Is *this* a more likely man? He has his oratory, too, but it is of a dumb kind. With a visage of smiling deference an old Hindu gentleman in a skull cap comes cringingly forward and embraces the boots of the Civil Surgeon, mistaking them for those of the Collector. "*Ghareeb parwar!*" he sighs, rather than says, with a gasping emphasis on the first syllable. Gautama Buddha comes down from his pedestal, and says that this man is an usurer and has many money-bags. The old gentleman has no breath for utterance : he can only shake his wrinkled pippin of a head, and wave his hands abroad with a silent vehemence of negation. He is pacified with a moderate assessment ; and after again falling effusively upon the Doctor's boots, he retires backwards with a bow at every step.

The little Marwari whom I have descriptively likened to a provision boat, comes to the front now in the fulfilment of a task which bears some relation to the functions of the master of such a craft. He is the committee's purveyor of hospital supplies, and notes have to be compared between him and the Compounder, who has been checking the stores taken in. It is, as it were, a 'tween-deck settlement between purser and bum-boat man. Both individuals have written all the items of their account on curiously small pieces of paper, and are consequently much put to it to decipher them. The Compounder is afflicted with a blank eye which "*skellies*" terribly on the beholder. The blunders and disputes of the pair, and the Gorgon head of one of them, are too much for the occupants of the chairs. The Compounder is made to take hasty refuge with his runic scrap behind the body of

the Civil Surgeon ; and the little Marwari plumps down between two substantial persons of his own trade, who now dwarf him in aspect as they have dwarfed him in business, and whose towering houses on each side of his humble shop have dwarfed and crowded out its pretensions to be a place for the sale of goods. His post of purveyor is taken from him, and his accounts are referred to a sub-committee. " *Sic transit &c.*"

QUEEN-EMPRESS *vs.* BUFFALO.

I.

THIS was a famous case. A buffalo
Had trespassed on a humble ryot's fields,
Trampling *jowarry*, *kudki*, or *kodo*
(No matter what the crop) and spoiled the yield.

II.

The beast was captured, but no man could tell
Who was its owner. It had strayed from far,
And had no story that the crowd could spell,
But a loud bellow—move of love than war.

III.

• What should be done ? Could ruin be endured
Without revenge ? Better to prosecute
The horned oppressor who this loss procured,
And strike the unknown master through the brute.

IV.

So before Titus Trifler, E. A. C.*
(Most learned lawyer, able Magistrate)
The case came on as quickly as might be,
Seeing the accused was ramping at the gate !

* Extra Assistant Commissioner.

V.

Section 427—Mischief Wrought—

By well-skilled witnesses appraised at more
Than rupees fifty. To the charge, as brought,
What says accused ?"—The answer was—a roar !

VI.

The Court's Interpreter assured the court
That the "Buff" pleaded "guilty." Ill at ease,
Heedful of fiery eye and angry snort,
The Judge gave sentence—"Fine of Fifty Rupces."

VII.

"And if not paid, accused himself to be
Sold as a chattel on a *fi-fu* writ!"
This said, the court adjourned—the bull broke free,
And twenty bailiffs still are after it !

OUR KALLAR.*

HE is but an ordinary-looking villager, undistinguishable from the other folk of the hamlet by his wearing-cloth, or his puggree, and the stranger can form no notion by looking at him of what an important person he is. His drinking shop and his distillery are both of them mean places. The former is better *leeped* † than the neighbouring houses. It is an open chamber, facing the street; and on the low mud partition which forms the bar, there are arranged certain miscellaneous jars and bottles which announce that spirits may be had within. The said spirits are contained in an old commissariat-barrel bunged with rag. A tin tablet, upon which accounts are scratched, hangs upon the wall and completes the furniture. If you

* Distiller of country spirits.

† Plastered with mud.

call out the proprietor of this unpretending gin-shop, and question him as to his trade, he will, of course, complain of hard times. Government now-a-days screws such a lot out of him, that he is obliged to water his spirits, and yet charge an *anna* more per bottle than he used to do. In consequence, his custom is declining. He will agree with you if you suggest that his rival, the proprietor of the opium-shop, is drawing away his trade; but he probably knows nothing at all about it. He leaves all that to the chief excise-man, whom he hates in his inmost soul. In old days he distilled when he chose, and what he chose; and he owned the *malak** and the *ganjat* shops as well as the gin-shop. The chief excise-man has changed all that. The triple alliance has been dissolved, and the drugs are his keen rivals for the popular favour. As for his dear old distillery, it has undergone a drastic change. The very name of it is unfamiliar. It used to be called an "out-still," probably because it was outside of official supervision. Now it is called a "contract-still," which means that he and the officials are continually in business contract; it is a tumbling-down shed, blocked with open hogsheads containing *mhowa*‡ in various stages of ferment; and four copper vats warming on four mud stoves. Each vat has a distilling siphon wrapped round with dirty rags, which are kept moist by an attendant. The whole place reeks with a peculiar odour, part yeasty, part drunken, part rotten—and a painful suspicion of shabby trickery hangs about it. Perhaps the suspicion is born of our own fertile imaginings, for we are always watching our kallar, and crediting him with innumerable rogueries. The interests at stake, you see, are so important. Little as the outsider may imagine it, this man holds, so to speak, the morality of thousands in the hollow of his vat. The trouble he

* A preparation of opium.

† A preparation of the hemp plant, highly intoxicant.

‡ The flower of the mhowa tree (*bassia latifolia*) from which a spirit is distilled.

gives us is immense. We figure him and his attendants chanting round their hell-broth, like the witches in Macbeth :—

“ Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble !—”

And anon :—

“ By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes ! ”

the “ something wicked ” being the chief excise-man or the Collector and his assistant seen through the distorting mists of guilt. We justify our inquisitorial office by peering into all the *mhowa* hogsheads, stirring up the wash with our sticks, examining the stamp on the vats, dropping a measuring-rod into the spirit barrels, calling for the receipts for duty paid, and asking one-and-twenty questions about the business and its management. When we have thoroughly satisfied ourselves that there is something wrong somewhere, and thoroughly impressed the kallar with the idea that we think him a scoundrel (but intend, with heaven's help, to outwit him), we write a long memorandum to this effect in the visitors' book, which is kept at the neighbouring police post, and go home with mixed feelings of joy in ourselves and disgust at the wickedness of man.

For, look you, it is a hard thing, when you have carefully calculated your averages, to find a wretched individual instance rise up and figuratively knock you down before you are aware of its purpose. When, by anxiously-wrought-out estimates, you have made your kallar contract with you on the basis that his utmost possible outturn is five brews *per diem*, it is both exasperating and appalling to find that he is able to brew a sixth : exasperating because of the higher contract—charge which the Government might have stipulated had it known this possible : appalling because of the thought that that same sixth brew will positively pass untaxed into the world of drinkers. It is as terrible to some of us as the omis-

sion of baptism at the earliest moment is to believers in infant damnation. This sixth barrel which has escaped the sanctifying sacrament of taxation is a horrible heathen thing, capable of spreading inestimable woe. *Omne vafer vitium illi circum pectora, &c.,* and how to exorcise the evil ? • •

We are torn with dissensions on this point. A kind of war of the Fronde rages on our district borders, and wordy battles are fought in the distilleries. The armouries of jurisprudence and of alcoholic literature are ransacked to find us weapons, and Jeremy Bentham is on the stage with Richardson. Facts cease to be stubborn things with us : we make them pliant, or are ready with our jeer,—*tant pis pour les faits !* Thus, the untaxed sixth barrel or brew—what of it ? It is at once an infraction of the noble rule of getting a maximum of revenue from a minimum of consumption ; and the vehicle for the accomplishment of that principle in fact, by enabling the distiller to work at a profit and to bid higher for the monopoly at the next auction. It is at once the *palladium* of morality by making possible the sale of unwatered liquor, and so staving off the rush of the stimulant-seeking multitude towards *madak* and *ganja* ; and it is the pestilent heresy which retrogrades towards outstills, and that life according to nature which finds drunken Gonds beneath the palm-trees. The poor kalla stands dumb with astonishment, and cannot make it out at all. While we are talking, his profits do not grow bigger ; nor is it a consolation to him that some of us take his side on the sixth barrel question, when our partizanship effects nothing more than prosiness, or perhaps even verse, as the following selected stanza will evidence :—

Oh, *daru*,* dear *daru*, the fire of my youth
Has died with the fire that is no more in thee !
For the arts of excise-men have poisoned thy truth,
And a cup of ditch-water's the liquor for me !

* Spirituous liquor.

Can *madak* and *ganja* give ploughmen good cheer?
O *daru*, dear *daru*, why art thou so *dear*?

Why?—Because of the predominance of the sixth barrel¹
principle, of course!

DAY AFTER DAY.

I.

Day after day I rise and see
The withered grass, the stunted tree,
The rock-bound ridges, wrapt in haze,
The still pool festering in the blaze—

Day after day!

II.

Day after day, through glare and heat,
I seek a thankless Judgment seat
And hear, until my sick brain reels,
The endless babble of Vakeels—

Day after day!

III.

Day after day, and no step won!
“Off reckonings” keep the Colonels on—
Like limpets to a sea-trailed rope
Captains and Majors cling to hope,

Day after day!

IV.

An oyster on a windlorn reef
Were blithe as I—and I would lief
That mollusc be—’Twould please me well
To round a pearl within my shell,

Day after day!

A PRISON CONFERENCE.

THE Superintendent of the Jail crowed so mockingly over the station Magistrates, because of certain things which had been said in high quarters about their want of courage in punishing old offenders, that the latter grew wroth.

They vowed that the fault of leniency was within the Jail walls, and not outside of it; and their awards were based upon a theory of prison discipline which was not carried out in fact. "Imprisonment," said they, "is supposed to be as bitter as poison to the rebel spirit which suffers it; and in dealing with poisons, one must be careful about the dose. To hastily double it, might involve evil consequences; whereas a slight addition to the amount of the former draught ought to answer all ends, if only the medicament is potent." So they resolved on a visit to the Jail, that they might vindicate their tenets in the face of existent facts. The Superintendent was averse from taking it gravely; for he preferred anecdotic lore to dry discussion, and the Junior Magistrate was prone to levity; but the Head of the District put all frivolity aside with a sternness worthy of the bench. They proceeded thus:—*The Superintendent*.—"These are my oil mills. What harder labour could you have than this? It is as though you combined the toil of the pestle and mortar with that of the bathing-machine windlass. That reminds me—I will tell you a most extraordinary story of a bathing-machine." *The Senior Magistrate*.—"Pardon me. I must here point out that the working of this ugly-looking engine is tempered by amenities which considerably impair its punitive value. There is the perception of useful results accruing to labour expended, which is always agreeable to the mind; and there is the sympathetic alloy of companionship in travail. Now if each of these convicts who are—" *The Junior Magistrate*.—"Rubbing galled shoulders like the hacks in a

ticca-garry?" *Senior Magistrate.*—"I accept the illustration. Do not the tired yoke-fellows whinny to each other, and nudge noses at the end of a stage? Put one of them in shafts, and half his gameness will be gone. In the same way, these energetic fellows would be much more doleful over their work if they were put in single harness and wore blinkers." *Junior Magistrate.*—"And had bits in their mouths and bearing-reins on their necks?" *Senior Magistrate.*—"That would be a servile and unnecessary imitation of the paraphernalia proper to horses. The points to be insisted on are concealment of the result of labour and seclusion of the individual. The lot of a prisoner should be as bitter as possible; and nothing is more bitter than lone unproductive task-work as monotonous in its undistracted round as the windlass-path of that bathing-machine horse to which the Superintendent referred." *Superintendent.*—"You will hardly believe the story, but it is a fact. Were you ever at Brighton? Well, the horse that used to pull up the machines there, was a white horse; and every Sabbath, on the Sfeyne, its gaunt form used to be conspicuous from a distance, as it went diligently round and round in an opposite direction to that in which it circled on week days. It was obliged to do this to correct the accumulated giddiness of the seven days preceding." *Senior Magistrate.*—"I should like to see our prisoners doing the same. One may pick up many hints in this way from the sufferings of the animal creation. The forced exercise of the squirrel or white mouse in its revolving cage, doubtless suggested the treadmill." *Superintendent.*—"But these prisoners, who are grinding corn in sentry-boxes, bolt upright at their work: surely their punishment could not be made more severe?" *Senior Magistrate.*—"It is a good device, but has one defect; their labour produces distinct quantitative results under their very eyes. There is a certain gratification to be derived from watching a pile of grain gradually triturated into flour of a required fineness un-

der the stress employed. If these men had to turn wall-winches, the punitive effect would be far stronger. The winches might be connected by means of cog-wheels and iron rods, with a large mill outside the jail; and though the fact that they were doing real work would be known to the convicts, yet the pleasure of observing its progress would be entirely absent."

Junior Magistrate.—"The thing has been tried at home; but I have not heard that crime was extirpated in consequence. Perhaps Peter Taylor stepped in."

Superintendent.—"I was at home at the time. Some were for abolishing the system, others for modifying its use. One humanitarian recommended that if the winches were retained, they should be made to turn musical barrels fitted into the walls of the cells, so that hard labour should attune palms, and select melodies of a kind fitted to elevate and refine. The experiment was tried; but it was not found possible to determine satisfactorily what kind of tunes would soothe particular individuals into the receptive condition requisite for the absorption of noble ideas. Six hours of the "Old Hundredth" induced a violent fit of profanity in the old burglar who ground it; and the same effect was caused by an hour's performance of one of Bach's fugues in the case of a gentleman-forger."

Senior Magistrate.—"Lamentable. I do not hold that crime can be extirpated by any system of mere punishments. It may, however, be controlled more efficiently and economically than it is at present. If, apart from the monitory effects which legal sentences exercise on the criminally inclined, it be intended that punishment should leave a deterrent impression on the offender, an acute rather than a chronic form of discipline should be adopted.

A sharp corrective strikes deep, and affects the imagination; whereas a long-sustained chastisement of a more moderate kind only dulls the sensibility of the sufferer."

Junior Magistrate.—"Aye, aye, the thumb-screws and the rack, instead of hand-mills and rope-making machines. For my part, I think tor-

ture might well be re-introduced into our prisons—not for the old object of extracting confessions, but for the more philosophic purpose of inculcating the lesson which every child has learnt who has once burned its finger. *Dont do it again* should be underscored with a smarting line like that which the rattan leaves on the pilferer's back. Must penal ingenuity stop short at the whip?" *Superintendent*.—"I always rub in a little salt. It stings, but heals." *Senior Magistrate*.—"The brank, the spiked collar, and the iron boot might all be brought upon the list of punitive devices, but, for the fact that if forms of acute punishment are made too acute, we overshoot the mark, and produce a lively sense of injury in the patient, instead of a sorrowful repentance. The manually-corrected child is stung into resentment, and sometimes kicks its parent; and that wholesome impression which a more impersonal penalty might have produced, is overlaid with a brooding sense of the tyranny of strength over weakness." *Junior Magistrate*.—"When my nurse whipped me I hated her; when she imprisoned me in the cupboard, I expended my wrath on the cupboard." *Senior Magistrate*.—With treadmill and the winch worked in solitude, and with concealment of the results of labour, I am of opinion that we might considerably reduce our average terms of imprisonment for all kinds of offences, and effect a saving in the cost of Jails without impairing the efficiency of the punishment. Where a convict now spends a year in making ropes, dusters, and carpets, and in other occupations highly pleasing to the visitors' eye, but scarcely corrective enough for the offender, he might with equally good results pass three months in turning an unseen mill by means of a treadle. The recollection of his experience in the latter case would have a deeper bite upon his brain than the memory of hours whiled away with the shuttle and loom." *Junior Magistrate*.—"The fact is, that the confinement of a convict for a long period within Jail walls is ordinarily looked upon

as the main part of his punishment, and the daily task to be allotted him there is but supplementary to this ; whereas you would regard the Jail but as the arena or torture-room, wherein the really telling corrective may be conveniently applied ?"

Senior Magistrate.—"Exactly ; only do not call it a torture-room, as the word 'torture' has an excessive connotation. Disciplinary punishments lie in the direction of torture, but do not touch it. Some of them go very near—as whipping,

when the subject is thin-skinned." *Superintendent*.—"But the longer a confirmed scoundrel is kept shut up from mischief, the better. Where would be the gain in letting him loose speedily ? I do not believe in the reformation of prison birds. When I was in Dublin"—*Senior Magistrate*.—"Neither do I. In shutting up a convict for a long term, however, his past misdeeds are at present looked to, and not the propriety of secluding him for any particular period from the world. If more attention were given to the latter consideration, he would, in a large number of cases, be imprisoned for life. Although, therefore, I recommended short and sharp sentence for offenders who have not been convicted more than once, I hold that a man who is caught a third time in the act of breaking the laws which have been twice emphasized on his person and liberty, should be regarded as incorrigible and incarcerated for the rest of his days. To shut him up for five or seven years is only to temporize with evil, and upon his release there will be no end of trouble in looking after him and recapturing him when he sins."

Junior Magistrate.—"Alas for personal right and the sacred liberty of the subject ! But how about budget provision ? Your savings upon early-released prisoners would be all swallowed up in maintaining the life-termers. Prisoners do not pay." *Senior Magistrate*.—"Because the two ideas of punishment—according to one of which penal discipline is composed of hard jail-tasks in addition to jail confinement, and according to the other,

a lengthy term of imprisonment is held to warrant a proportional reduction in the ordinary burden imposed—are not kept sufficiently distinct. Labour is muddled away upon what are primarily prison duties, and not commercially paying enterprises. Given a large body of life prisoners, and employ them one and all, as the 'hands' of a factory, entirely on some business requiring division of labour, and surely you could make a profit? The cost of watch and ward could hardly exceed the sum which would be consumed in the wages of workmen in a private business." *Junior Magistrate*.—"Ask at Hazareebagh." *Superintendent*.—"When I was in Dublin, an Egyptian scholar, whose brain was rather turned by the study of hieroglyphics, published a scheme for the pacification of Ireland by employing prison labour to revive in the city the glories of Luxor and Karnac. He suggested that the Princes of Wales might be sepulchred in pyramids like those of Ghizeh, to be erected in Phoenix Park." *Senior Magistrate*.—"We must be going. Good morning, friend." *Junior Magistrate*.—"Ta-ta, Doctor."

THE WRONG GHAT.*

Oh Mahadev ! in thy sacred name
 What things are done ! Thy Brahmins shame
 The stream which from thy long lock flows,
 And past the ghâts of Kashi goes—
 Cursed by the priest who soiled thy fame
 And fooled thy slave when there he came !

* Bathing-stairs : of which there are many on the banks of the Ganges at Kashi, or Benares. The river is fabled to flow from the head of Mahadev, or Siva : and Brahmin priests take toll of the pilgrims who flock to its banks to bathe.

II.

He led me down to the unknown shore
 With many a *mujtra* muttered o'er,
 Blessed me with tears, as I waded in,
 And cleansed my soul, while I cleansed my skin,
 With "shloks" and fragments of Vedic lore
 Tastefully culled from his private store !

III.

Shivering, I thought—"My soul is saved!"
 Then I scrambled out. My head was shaved,
 And the priest with *chandon* and tumeric,
 On breast and belly bedaubed me thick,
 And painted the *teeka* my forehead craved
 Red as the banner which o'er us waved !

IV.

I gave him silver and gauds in fee
 And left the ghât in righteous glee ;
 But ere I reached my lonely inn
 I felt the sore load of my sin
 Return—Great Ganges, could it be ?
 An *ague* had got hold of me !

V.

Forgive the lips which pain made quiver !
 Thou wert not, Mahadev, the giver
 Of the fierce pangs which thou didst seem—
 I had not bathed in Ganga's stream ;
 Tricked by the Priest (God rend his liver !)
 I'd dipt into the Burna* river !

* The Burna falls into the Ganges at Benares.

MUNICIPAL SORROWS.

It was a noble idea, born of the historic sense and of love of humanity—

“From out the storied past, and used
Within the present, but transfused
Through future time by power of thought”

that gave the privileges of a Municipium to Kamalpur. Memories of the glory of the free cities of Lombardy and of the stubborn independence of the Hanse towns floated through the Secretariat mind as the decree was framed. Enthusiasm was stronger than the philosophic warnings which familiarly rang—

“O pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
That every sophister can lime!”

and the Tahsildar, the Hospital Assistant, the Honorary Magistrate, and the biggest *bania* of the town, were made into a Municipal Committee. The school-master was Secretary, for he was the only one who would write English, and make the proceedings of the Committee clearly intelligible at headquarters. It was with great difficulty that the *bania* could be got to act, for he feared a serious interruption to his ordinary business, but was soon persuaded of the groundlessness of his fear.

Behold, then, the callow Municipium fairly started on its lofty way, heralded with Gazette notices, and beckoned to renown by the far-seen phantom of an Annual Report. Prosperity attend it! But let us remember that in these days of transition—

“A slow develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;”

and it was not long before the school-master found out

the painfulness of it. The committee would not come together. The *bania* was engaged, or the Honorary Magistrate was seedy, or the Tahsildar was on tour.

When, by great exertions, the Secretary had collected the pack, they refused to hunt—declined altogether, that is to say, to frame *leges municipales*, preferring to talk scandal and to indulge in personal recrimination. “Sir,” he pitifully wrote to the District Officer, “I pray you let me cease to be Secretary, for the members will not sign the record of their proceedings which I write, saying that they never said the things which I have written. Now; this is unworthy both of them and of me, and my honour is dear to me.” The District Officer had to make a flying journey to the place and hold a meeting of the committee. He explained to them their duties and privileges. They were to levy taxes and keep a clean and orderly town with the proceeds. Also, they might make roads and build a school, if they had money enough. He left them his official blessing and an injunction to be more tender to the feelings of the Secretary.

The privilege of taxing oneself is greatly prized by western peoples ; but it has scarcely the same charm for the eastern mind. So when the Secretary, who had been reading the *Gazette*, wherein the acts of other municipalities were recorded, suggested a house-tax, the Honorary Magistrate and the *bania* were peremptory in negation. Both had large houses, and would not endure that they should be assessed for them. A bazaar-tax was equally abominable in their eyes, for both had stalls in the market.

“ Better tax strangers than our own good citizens,” was the cry ; and so an octroi scheme was carried unanimously. The Secretary recorded that, as the many traders who bring goods to the town enjoy the facilities of its streets and market, it is but right and proper they should contribute something. The *bania* took care that the rate on ghee (which he imported)

should not be too high ; and the Honorary Magistrate looked after the interest of piece-goods. The proposals so plausibly made were duly sanctioned by the District Officer and his superiors, and ultimately appeared in the pages of the *Gazette*.

Now all went smoothly for a time with the Municipality, if not with its Secretary. A handsome income flowed into its coffers. The school-master found himself an engineer of roads and an architect of public buildings. The Honorary Magistrate and the *lania* became the heads of two powerful factions representing the interests of rival contractors for works. The contractors attended the committee-meetings to back their tenders, and stormy discussions were the result. The Secretary reported to the District Officer that "it is painful to me to write down the words which the non-official members use to each other and to myself. They are *neh* ignorant of the noble arts of Macadam and Christopher Wren, and yet presume to meddle with the *pucca* drains that I am making. I will be obliged to resign, &c." Again the District Officer had to appear on the scene. He dismissed the swindling contractors, arranged for the services of an Overseer, and insisted on the committee's leaving its Secretary leisure to attend to his pedagogic duties. For a brief time the benefit of his instructions endured ; but a worse thing shortly befell. In an unfortunate hour for itself, the Municipality took a census of its inhabitants, the results of which came to the knowledge of the Supreme Government. That Government had a carefully-prepared table on hand, showing exactly how many pounds of ghee, how many yards of piece-goods an average Hindoo should consume in the year. Taking the total annual imports of these commodities into the town of Kamalpur, and dividing the figure by the total census, the Government was horrified to find that the imports exceeded the outside limit of possible local consumption. Plainly, then, the wretched Municipality was levying a tran-

sit tax on trade—a thing denounced and abhorred by all the Smiths, McCullochs, Bastiats, Rogers, and Fawcetts that have ever lived and lectured. A terrible letter was written to the "locals," and winged Mercury came with all speed to Kamalpur. The *bania* and the Honorary Magistrate protested that, being dealers in ghee and picce-goods, they did not find the octroi at all inconvenient, for they feared greatly the imposition of a house-tax. After a protracted debate and correspondence, it was settled that a liberal system of refunds upon exports should be instituted, and the octroi saved for the present. Upon the introduction of this rule ensued a sad season of decay in the Municipality, which will best be described by the following quotations from a letter from the Secretary to the District Officer:—"All here," he wrote, "is in confusion and immorality and decadence. The Honorary Magistrate has been abusing the bye-laws by fining the *bania* for a nuisance which he never committed. This is offensive to God and man. Nor is this all. The *bania* has got a tool of his made Octroi Darogah ; and what refunds he would, so many he gets. Many passes are forged and uttered. Now the Honorary Magistrate dare not report of it to you, for he fears the *bania* will speak of the realizations of bad debts which he (the Honorary Magistrate) by wicked working of the bye-laws, has been able to effect. So all remains in darkness and shame. They make their profit by the new rules, while I and the unhappy town are the only sufferers. For my time is wholly taken up in writing refund-orders, so that I have been reproved by the District Inspector for the bad attendance-average at my school. How can I be running after the missing scholars, while the great river of refunds is ever rolling on past my desk, and keeping me, as it were, enisled? I grieve to say that whereas we once had fine metalled roads and good drains, now these things are no longer visible ; we have no money to do anything, and all is in ruins. What is the use of this large establishment

of mohurirs and peons, who only gather money at one gate which is paid back again at the other ? The few drops out of this transit-flow that remain within the town are not sufficient to water the roads. I pray your honour to give this matter your kind attention. His honour *dit.* The Secretary's remarks about the transit-flow seemed to him very apposite. The emasculated octroi system, which takes with one hand and gives with the other, is an anomaly without logical base. If the aim is merely to tax local consumption, why not take the direct and inexpensive way of taxing the local dealers in articles locally consumed, not by assessment of the said articles, but by estimation of the profits on their sale ? As for the argument about trade giving some consideration for the conveniences the Municipality affords, who, after all, are the main representatives of the trade thus benefited ? Why, the resident traders themselves ! So the District Officer argued ; and determined on the discomfiture of the committee. He procured the abolition of octroi, and insisted on the adoption of the dreaded house-tax. From the time it was imposed, the Municipality gave him no peace. The Secretary was busier than ever, being for ever inditing petitions from this and that class of inhabitants against the tyranny of the tax. "The poor are leaving their homes," he wrote, "unable to support this new burden. Some say it is the Honorary Magistrate and the late Darogah, who, with the help of the discharged mohurirs, are making an agitation ; but I, for one, do not credit this. However, the receipts are almost nothing. Where is now our proud Municipality ?" Ah, where indeed ! And when the Tahsildar joined the malcontents by sending up a terribly-reduced assessment list for the following year (*nadarad*, or penniless, being inscribed opposite a third of the householders' names), the Collector gave way. It was necessary to save the Municipality from extinction ; so he introduced a trade-tax. This was, indeed, vengeance on the

bania, who already paid provincial income-tax ; and not to let the Honorary Magistrate off easily, the latter's nephew, whom he had got put in as his mohurir, was taxed on his pay, as a person "making profits by business." The *bania* always cast it in the nephew's teeth that the assessment was nominal, his real profits being unknown.

Thus reformed in its finances, the Municipality is now able to repair its drains and roads, and to have a *modicum* over for rubbish-bins and such like luxuries. But, meanwhile, what of that fair freedom of whom it is writ—

"Then stept she down through town and field,
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men revealed
The fullness of her face?"

Did the Municipality recognize her and throb with joy? I much fear that they offended her with their petty squabbles, so that she hid her face and left them, especially when she heard the tread of the angry District Officer. But, at least, the school-master has learned something of the troubles of Government, and the District Officer has been shown how unfit the school-master, with his querulous inutility, is for that executive post he has been long seeking. Moreover, the committee has reached its true level of usefulness—being merely the interpreter of the Collector's wishes to the townsfolk—the channel of communication of the latter's grievances to him. And the moral crowning all is—

"Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness."

DESINE QUERELIS.

I.

CEASE to complain—a soft brecze blowing
 Beneath grey skies and o'er moist leas,
 Restores life's bloom with the time of sowing,
 And a tender green to the quickened trees !

II.

The hot, dry gust of summer's passion
 Is gone, as thirst from the drenchen ground;
 Long suits of toil are the pleas in fashion,
 And peasants' cares to their ploughs are bound !

III.

When earth lay faint in her haggard beauty
 The angels carried her Soma-wine,
 And Indra's voice, like the voice of duty,
 Said "Drink!"—She flushed to a bloom divine,

IV.

She whispers "Work!"—Wilt thou slight her bidding?
 The clouds drop balm—shall they weep in vain?
 Nay, rend the toils thy pride was thridding,
 And turn, vain man, to thy desk again!

THE SUPERNUMERARY.*

It is curious with what exaggerated notions of his future career the young competition-wallah sets foot in this country. The Civil Service Commissioners are not to blame, for they maintain an icy reserve when the selected *ephebi* appear before them. Cannon-street echoes to no lofty and didactic oratory like that which draws applause at Cooper's Hill. I think

* Junior Civil Servants who are not as yet graded in the official complement of a Non-Regulation Province are called "Supernumeraries."

the cause is to be found in the common, and it may be weak, human belief that there always exists a proportion between preparations and results ; and that when laborious studies are demanded of the candidate for some employment, this is evidence that the employment is of a kind which only learning or genius can duly fulfil. Youth is full of fantastic visions and of rude enlightenments. The discovery that the work before him demands no special talent or knowledge, but is already handled successfully by men of ordinary education and common sense, is no doubt a healthy surprise for the young servant of Government. Fresh from the university, from his Temple studies, from lectures and examinations on political economy, Indian polity, the philosophy of history and law, he arrives on the burnt-up plains of India like a *sarant* laden with scientific implements, and eager to bring his apparatus to bear on the facts around him. He soon discovers that the climate is not deemed favourable to scientific research, and that his usefulness will depend on his business capacities, and not on his equipment. He finds the all-round motto to be—" An ounce of mother-wit is worth a pound of clergy," and sinks at once into a Supernumerary Assistant Commissioner and the duties of a Post Office Clerk. His youthful imagination is not, however, all at once daunted. It throws a glamour about the person of his superior, the all-powerful administrator of the district, whom even his intimates dare not plainly name. When they have occasion to speak of him, they use the mystic letters D. C., meaning, perhaps, Dread Cause, or Deus Clemens. Sometimes the D. C. is a Major or Colonel in Her Majesty's army—a duplicate capacity which fills the young Supernumerary with awe. He thinks of the old Italian sun-god, Janus Geminus, who is represented with two faces, looking front and back.

The D. C.'s wife treats him with the kindly condescension appropriate to her position ; and speaks familiarly of him to

her friends as "her husband's assistant." When the Supernumerary hears this phrase for the first time, he shudders, thinking of the grocer's counter and parcels done up with twine, but he soon grows callous. If he is of winning manners, the D. C.'s wife will make him her Aide-de-Camp and anoint him with her smiles. Putting these trifles aside, the Supernumerary sets himself to work to study the habits and official occupation of his superior with a view to getting an insight into that "district experience" of which he has heard so much. He has been told that persons high in office have sacrificed for a time the comforts of their elevated station, and sought a lowly residence in the Mofussil, for the sake of the priceless lessons which real district work alone can give. "Build me a cottage in the vale," they have said, and abandoned their proud palaces of art. Like most men who have spent much time over books, he longs to discover the joys of action, to feel his hands on the reins of human joy and woe, to be a vindicator of order and sanitation in an administrative area which, as the Home papers have repeatedly told him, is often as large as Yorkshire. He hints as much to the D. C., who is troubled in spirit thereat. It is so very griffinish and awkward to be zealous. Happily, a petition from some magicians, to the effect that they are assured by their divination that there is treasure of gold hidden in a certain field hard by, turns up at the right moment, and the Supernumerary is given command of a body of coolies with pick-axes, and told to trench the spot. He finds nothing; and writes a long and interesting report on his failure. Joy of joys, *his first report!*

It may be that his first D. C. is a minute, laborious man, who is only too glad to find a willing coadjutor in his humbler duties. He leads the youthful Hastings to the dâk bungalow, and makes him count over all the knives and forks and sheets and table-cloths, and report whether the numbers correspond with those in the official list of furnishing. Then he takes

him to the town latrines ; but there is no need to pursue further his researches in this direction. Homely tasks of this kind somewhat damp the Supernumerary's early ardour. He is fortunate, however, if his D. C. happens to belong to the hunting class. The hunting class has two sub-divisions—hunters of beasts, and hunters of men. The beast-hunter is a healthy, vigorous person, who takes his young charge out tiger-shooting without delay, and soon "knocks all the nonsense out of him." Under the beast-hunter's tuition he learns to regard the district as a shooting preserve, in which a sprinkling of churls are allowed to reside out of humanity, and on condition of their giving early *khabar* of game. They sometimes give trouble by litigation ; but a rigorous repression of appeals crushes out this fanatical tendency. The man-hunting D. C. regards the normal condition of his district as one of sedition and conspiracy. He clothes himself with shadows, and vexes his soul with dark imaginings. A delightful feeling of heroic danger creeps over the Supernumerary who is under his orders, and who is constantly being button-holed and made to listen to a tale of treachery laid bare. How the *Munsarim* has been plotting with the *Muhafiz Duflar*, and how the *Tahsildar** is implicated. Between them, these two, it seems, have played "the very mischief" with the Government records ; and there remains no course but to clap them both into jail. The Supernumerary is sent to arrest the Tahsildar, as a first step ; and does it with a feeling that he is like the Gaul who was sent to decapitate Marius in the interests of Sylla. *Tune homo audes in ergastulum concudere Vithul Damodhar ?*

One morning, the D. C. awfully approaches his subordinate with a man's bleached thighbone in his hand. "*What think you, is this?*" he asks, flourishing it spectrally around. Before the astonished Super has time to reply, a whisper is hissed

* Native Deputy Collector.

in his ear, "*Murder, I take it! I found it in a corner of the public garden!*" Further detail is not vouchsafed; and the Assistant is left in dreadful uncertainty as to whether the Civil Surgeon, who has charge of the garden, may not have been cruelly done to death; till the latter turns up from a vaccination tour, and explains that a part of the ground was formerly used as a Mahomedan place of burial.

These things seem strange to the inexperienced; but it is wonderful how time takes off the edge of contrast, and obliterates our disappointments with the dull philosophy of content. Even the violently eccentric D. C., who hurls oaths and ink-stands about his cutcherry, and fires a pistol off at his Police Inspector, ceases in time to astonish the youthful Assistant. Gradually there grows upon his spirit the perception that the India of his imagination was a vain, unreal thing; and that the India of reality is a dull, commonplace neighbourhood, bare even of small talk, and business-like as a negro-plantation. Gradually the horizon of his thought narrows, and his interests become bounded in by such provincial questions as the prospects of promotion, and the rights of military civilians who "fought for the empire in 1857." By-and-by, even these subjects become, as it were, high politics to him; and he is content in ordinary converse to talk of the Commissioner's last visit, and to anticipate with joy the sight of a new face in the station. Perhaps he quarrels with the D. C.'s wife and does not like the D. S. P. All human intercourse practically ceases for him, for the Eurasian doctor is no companion. He sits, like Enoch Arden on his island, longing for the coming of a friend, be it even a Chief Commissioner.

"The glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world;
All these he sees; but what he fain would see
He cannot see, the kindly human face:
Nor ever hear a kindly voice."

To divert his thoughts from morbid introspection, he takes to literature; which is better than taking to liquor. Or he takes fever; and, in the empiric hands of the Eurasian doctor, is speedily reduced to that state wherein all ambitious frettings are forgotten, and goes the journey for which no *viaticum* is now provided, and for which no travelling allowance bill is ever passed.

JUNE.

I.

PASSED as a dream!—and the rain-drops falling
Banish it, bury it far and low—
Long green grasses are merrily calling
“Where is the demon of Summer now?”

II.

Tall, lithe shoots of the bamboo swinging
Signal their thanks for cool airs blown;
Bells of the Yucca are breezily singing
“Autumn is with us, and Summer is flown!”

III.

Would that the rain with its soft insistence
Our hearts’ bitterness might pursue,
Temper the past to a shadowy distance,
Quicken our happier aims anew.

IV.

Hope can rival the bamboo’s spiring,
Joy be blither than Yucca-bells—
Hear, O! Autumn, our souls’ desiring,
Chasten us, christen us, out of thy wells!

THE D. C.

Of the different kinds of D. Cs. something has already been said. The D. C.'s duties and the position he occupies in his district remain to be described. It is a great mistake to conceive of him as a person possessed of much original authority. A nerve-ganglion gathers and transmits sensation, but it cannot be said to be a source of them. The D. C. is only a ganglion in the nervous system of administration, which has its brain-centre at the departmental head-quarters. There is hardly anything which he can do without reference to superior authority, and the whole of his workings are controlled by higher criticism.

He is Collector, Magistrate, and Civil Judge, but the Commissioner and the Judicial Commissioner keep their eyes upon his collections, check his law, and regulate the average number of days which each trial shall last. He cannot even buy a chair or a writing desk without permission. As Collector, he simply drives the Tahsildars; but as Magistrate and Civil Daniel, he is a personal drudge of the most thorough-going description. Hour after hour of his official day is spent in recording evidence, and his fingers are numb when he lays down his pen. He only lays it down to listen to his Reader's sing-song. What the Reader mostly reads to him is evidence, recorded by Subordinate Magistrates and Judges, against whose decisions appeals have been preferred; but this is varied with the recitation of police diaries, and of a hundred and one reports and references by scrawling mohurries and darogahs. In this way the most of his time is occupied either in writing or in hearing writings read. From time to time he has to frame reports upon his progress in these two lines of business. When

he gets his tents out of his store and goes on tour in his district, he does not escape the reading and writing furies ; they follow him, and worry him wherever he goes. Perhaps if he gets up very early, he is able to leave them sleeping, and to rush desperately to a school, a dispensary, a distillery, or a culvert, which needs inspection ; but they are sure to be on him before he gets back to his *chota hazari*. They come riding behind the *sowar*, who brings the morning's *dak*. By reason of this haunting tyranny he cannot stay long in any one place. He can do little more than write despairing little notices in the visitors' books of the various schools, dispensaries, and distilleries which he sees and passes on.

At the wind of his coming, the tracks along which his progress is mapped are hastily smoothed for him by Tahsildars* and chief constables : the school committees make usual efforts to collect the scholars and present them all with new caps : the hospital *baboo* fills in the tickets over the patients' bedsteads : and the malguzars work zealously in the cause of village conservancy. When he has passed, things go back mostly to their old courses again.

Every year the Commissioner issues a circular upon road-making, full of familiar references to our old friends—the ghats, the boulders, the side-drains, and the depressions. Every year the Sanitary Commissioner makes a memorandum on the topic of the spillings of wells, the sweepings of villages, and the deposit of faeces. Every year the Inspector-General of Education bemoans the faulty attendance at this or that school. The fury-haunted D. C. can only fulminate *parwanas*, write remarks in visitors' books, terrify a malguzar or two, and *pass on*. When he has passed things go back mostly, as has been said, to their old courses again.

Here, in India, the magic of the master's eye is the one thing needful for the thorough accomplishment of practical

* Native Deputy Collectors.

work of all kinds. Without it, no good roads can be made, no sanitation can be ensured, no educational backslidings can be checked. Then, why does the district do without it ?

Because, briefly, we have acted upon the saying that there can be no more oppression where every man has a right of petition and a right of appeal from the order passed on his petition ; and have elaborated therewithal a ponderous system of judicial and non-judicial hearings, rehearings, and appeals. The country being poor, cannot afford many officers ; and the few it can afford are almost entirely occupied in carrying out the system. The District Head is the most occupied of all. It is not denied that a labouring population require other things besides the right of petitioning and appealing ; it is not denied that roads, sanitation, education are things almost more important than justice, for without them justice might never be reached. It is only deplored that the system takes up so much time that the other things cannot get all the attention they should. Is there no remedy for the evil ? It is not certain that the general introduction of type-writers might not lessen pressure on the D. C.'s time. Other suggestions are the extended use of summary procedure and the making English the language of record in all subordinate courts. But these are small contributions. A palliative recently tried with success has been to hand over the appeals to an Assistant. A remedy still to be subjected to experience is to convert the D. S. P. into something more than a police officer. Why should not the D. S. P. look after roads, sanitation, and school attendance, as well as after crime ? Consider the influence and the facilities for control in these matters possessed by the D. S. P. He is always on the march, and need not be in a hurry, except when a murder or a dacoity is on hand. His circles of inspection and circles of patrol cover the whole district. His eyes and hands are in a manner every where, and he is not distracted from giving attention to what they

inform him of by the daily necessity of hearing suitors and of recording their statements. "If the D. C. cannot do the D. C.'s work (of which road-making, sanitation, &c., surely is a part), some one had better do it for him—and who better situated for doing it than the D. S. P.? Of course, the D. S. P.'s Departmental Head would make a noise; but then a head can always be cut off—as Tarquin pointed out long ago in his garden.

SEPTEMBER.

I.

IN the eyes of September the smiles of November
Mingle, as blue with grey—
As gladness from sorrow a deep light doth borrow.
So is earth's glance to-day!

II.

The teak-tree, beholding the lily unfolding
Flags of a wondrous green,
Puts on a gay bonnet with yellow stars on it
And gossamer wefts between!

III.

Down by the grey river while sad rushes quiver,
Here, where the wold runs high,
Made proud by morn's wilting, the millet-blades smiling,
Challenge the deep-hued sky.

IV.

Would lovely September might leave to November
This mantle she trails so low—
But ruthless October is sure to disrobe her,
And all the green grass will go!

THE D. S. P.*

IN that wonderful microcosm, which is called a district, there are two governing powers which, with some of the subtlety that characterized the metaphysical theology of Alexandria, we must yet conceive of as forming but one power. If D. C. stands for *Deus Causans*, then D. S. P. may be taken to mean *Diabolus Sinapizans* or *Sinepudicitia*. For, in some respects, the D. S. P. resembles Ahriman, the prince of the powers of darkness, and is therefore in antagonism with the principles of light and leading, which it is the business of the D. C. to indicate. For the most part, however, he is the D. C.'s co-adjutor and terrible shadow ; and therefore I prefer to read the symbols as signifying *Dei Simulacrum Praebet*,—a rendering which is surely void of offence.

Persons who are perplexed about the possibility of governing Egypt by means of an international commission working through departmental officers, should take heart of grace when they see how well our little lands of Goshen get on. Every district is controlled by a board, the members of which are severally responsible for their work to a kind of All-the-Sciences committee sitting at head-quarters and representing the continents of medicine, political economy, education, architecture and police. Could anything be more simple ?

It was feared that Wilson might quarrel with DeBlignières ; but tact and the principles of light and leading avoided that ; and when the D. S. P. shows a tendency to make a departmental stand against the D. C., the same fortunate qualities stave off a rupture. At the very worst, a change of scene is possible ; and the D. S. P. passes from Egypt to Asia Minor, Bactria, or the Perim district. He is an old campaign-

* District Superintendent of Police.

er, and does not mind travel. Ideally, he is to be conceived of as standing for ever with one foot in the stirrup, ready to go anywhere at a furious pace, and, listening to *roznamchas* till the arrival of the red letter,* throws his other leg across. Practically, however, he is to be found in the public garden, looking after the sowing of cabbages; or listening to the same *roznamchas* in the quiet of his office. Cabbages and *roznamchas* are both of them dull and hibernating things to deal with, but they act as useful lenitives to the quick and Uhlan-like spirit which passes so much of its time in scouring the disordered marches of crime. A daily course of police diaries, recited in sing-song by a nasal *mohurrir* would deprive an ordinary man of his reason; but the D. S. P. is said rather to like the recitation, and to find in it a special kind of lullaby. Not that he goes to sleep. On the contrary, he must be particularly wide-awake. In the hall of the All-the-Sciences committee stands a gigantic statue of Diva Numeria, or "dear Old Mother Statistics." Before this statue, yearly and quarterly offerings in the shape of tabulated result-statements are reverentially laid by his departmental chief, to the sound of slow paeans. She is held to be most propitiated by a *fair average*, anything abnormal being particularly distasteful to her. Hence, it behoves the D. S. P. not to put his superior to shame by showing six robberies with violence where last year there were only two; or a lower proportion of convictions to reported offences than he was successful in gaining in the preceding quarter. On the other hand, it will by no means do to present too sudden a decrease of crime; for that would ruffle the calm of the divine Numeria, and perhaps compel her ministers to gash themselves with that two-edged and dangerous tool which is called a "generalization." So

* Intimations of cases of murder and dacoity are sent to Head-quarters in red envelopes.

the D. S. P. must be ever on the watch to see that chief constable Ram Sing is not merely padding his diary with petty details of how Munna Lal was bitten by a snake and treated with the cholera medicine kept in the station-house; or Mt. Chandbi fell down a well in the confusion of a domestic battle, and was hauled out again. He must give a fair measure of really criminal incident in return for his wage. Perhaps the reported crimes are above the average; and it then becomes of anxious moment to set things right by discovering whether the reports were *true* or not. If Ram Sing gives careful reasons for believing that Bhojraj only reported that his house had been broken into in order to stop the clamour of creditors thirsting for his cash, the D. S. P. will endorse a recommendatory note that the ungrammatical, but precious, *dictum*, "not occurred," be pronounced by the D. C. and duly inscribed in the register. These and many other considerations of interest keep the D. S. P. pretty wide awake, especially as he is ambitious to show a better result-statement than his neighbour in the next district. Occasionally, too, he has to jump up and visit the court of some refractory Magistrate, who refuses to believe that a certain seemingly-respectable traveller is really a *budmash* from Lucknow or the Berars, and ought to be incarcerated for six months; or to argue with the D. C. upon some question of wickedness, "not occurred," as aforesaid. All this leaves little time for the cabbages; and if the D. C. who refuses to write "not occurred," adds to his unpleasant obstructiveness a tendency to laugh at the "sugar loaves" and "drum heads," it must be admitted that there is some bitterness in what may be called the stirrup-cup of the Uhlan of administration. But now the red letter arrives, and the D. S. P.'s leg is across the saddle. He is a furious rider, and the wicked Kotwals of the villages he passes through (who are most of them in league with crime) shudder when he gallops past, as the German peasant shudders when

the vision of the "Englisch Hunt" (*die engelske Jagd*) makes fearful the night wind. Indeed, an extract from a description of the wild huntsman, as known in that country, seems appropriate to our Uhlan. "Mounted on his white or dappled-grey steed, the wild huntsman may always be recognized by his broad brimmed hat Who ever sees it approach must fall flat on the ground, or shelter himself under an odd number of boards, nine or eleven, otherwise he will be borne away and set down hundreds of miles away from home. . . . It is still more dangerous to look out of the window when Hakelberg is sweeping by The rash man gets a box on the ear that makes his head swell as big as a basket, and leaves a fiery mark on his cheek."* But the members of the Wild Hunt (head-constables, circle inspectors, and others, mounted on tattoos) rout out the *Kotwal* from under the shanty where he cowers, and bid him bring forth the malguzar, who was muttering in his back verandah—

"Though I am now as old as the Mahadeva wold,"†

Yet the like of this, I ween, in my life I ne'er have seen!'

and add his presence to the pursuit of the Boar of Crime.

It is this aspect of the D. S. P.'s Functions which makes him stand forth in the rural imagination as Dei Simulacrum, or as the D. C.'s terrible shadow; and it is in the exercise of this part of his duties that he shows some of the qualities of Ahriman. Familiarity with his visits, however, leads the innocent to cease regarding him with alarm; and when he sits at evening, in the door of his tent, the malguzars come as confidently and willingly as the angels did to Abraham, and tell him all the news of the country. He thus gets a large insight into the criminal proclivities and resources of the country side; and often gives the D. C. time-

* Kelly's Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore—p. 268.

† The Mahadeo hill-group is a portion of the Satpura Range.

ly warning that this or that Honorary Magistrate or Municipal Member is misusing his authority and dishonouring his office. He acquires, also, a considerable amount of influence in this way, without the aid of those material agencies which ill-founded scandal accuses him of working ; and can get roads put right, and stones and timber carted much quicker than the Tahsildar can. He is always needing stones and timber for his outposts, which, like a vigilant soldier, he pushes further forward upon the marches of crime, and keeps constantly in defensive repair. His active habits make of him a cheerful, business-like soul, and the ladies always appeal to his willing aid when they want anything, from a *darzi* to a water-cress. Being generally a military man, he retains something of the soldierly bearing ; and on seeing him in frogs and forage cap at the January Durbar, you feel that the district is both safer and grander for the presence of a son of Mars. Should the D. C. in *mufti* walk up and take the D. S. P.'s arm, the effect is electric ; and when the Civil Surgeon, the Executive Engineer, and the Supernumerary group themselves in the back-ground, the least emotional must join in the popular shout of—*Vivat Imperatrix !*

SICK.

R EACH me the scraffle-pipe whereon I blow :
Although the notes may trembling sound and low
I, laying sick upon this couch of pain,
Will yet unsing what I have piped in vain !
Ah, where is the summer's sun gone ?

II.

I hymned of autumn fair : thus shining meads,
Pahn-bordered rivors lush with grass and reeds
Are lovely to the eye, till cobras flash
Steel-hooded wrath and giants lizards clash !

Ah, where is the summer's sun gone ? •

III.

Nay, never more deceive my trusting love
Shade-haunting temptress ! Poisoned was the glove
Which covered the small hand my lips would kiss—
My lips are fevered now, but not with bliss ! •

Ah, where is the summer's sun gone ?

THE CIVIL SURGEON.

THE most comfortable and contented figure upon the Board of Guardians which manages the Humdrum District is the Civil Surgeon. Why he is so comfortable and contented it is difficult to say ; unless the contemplation of the fact that he has escaped from the army with its parades and hot uniform, and knows no real superior but the departmental head, who lives far away, is a “joy for ever” to him. The prospects of promotion, too, are so very remote, that he must needs make the best of things ; and a kindly Government allowing him to take root where he stands, without any of that anxiety as to *how he is growing* which leads it to dig up Supernumeraries, and *hoc genus omne*, he gracefully embowers himself in a flowery retreat, and “calls the cattle home” every evening. He is the patriarch of the station, and reckons time as Horace did the age of wine, by the succession of Chief Magistrates. Such and such an improvement, he will tell you, was made

when Colonel Bang was D. C. Poor Colonel Bang, who died of liver at Bath three years ago. As a consequence of so much experience, he is a perfect store-house of local gossip and antiquarian lore. The stone which you mistook for a Scythian monolith, he will tell you was set up by Major Snap in memory of a favourite Gond *shikarry*, who was killed by a tiger: and yonder ruins, which resemble a *hypæthral* temple, are the remains of a stone *serai* built in the good old times when there were no budgets, and district work-overseers got drunk on champagne. Along with these "auld warld" stories, he has much of current rumour to retail—*gup* about the marches and countermarches of the departmental heads, news of the latest move in the campaign between the Heaven-born and the "fighting-men of 1857," and the correctest information as to the teething-convulsions of the European constable's last infant. For these valuable qualities, he is welcome at every *chota hazri* table in the station, the welcome being quite independent of his professional character. Somehow or other, everyone, himself included, seems to tacitly settle that his professional character is rather an *incubus* than otherwise; and that, as far as possible, it should remain in abeyance. Of course, if there is serious illness, the ladies will appeal to him as the official representative of the department, whose business it is to suppress disease: but Moore's Family Medicine and the Hospital Assistant relieve him of a deal of profitless practice. It is a curious fact, by the way, that in India both the Established Church and the College of Physicians lose much of their prestige: contact with Oriental habits tending, apparently, to develop individualism both in religious and in medical practice. One is constantly discovering that one's neighbour is a lay preacher or an uncertificated practitioner of homœopathy in disguise. For the rest, Cockle and Holloway have no mean area of authority between them. The Civil Surgeon takes this state of things very contentedly.

He knows that the human, and especially the feminine, mind is much under the influence of externals; and that were he to wear broadcloth and speak as oilily as the Hospital Baboo, his professional esteem would be greatly heightened. But why should he make himself uncomfortable for the sake of pride? His situation has dignity enough without the addition of medical fame; and the area of that possible fame is so very narrow. So he wears jail-cloth and a huge pith *topee*—and is easy, and jocular, and anything in the world but professional. It must not be imagined that he is idle, because he is inclined to be stout. As one of the Board of Guardians, he has plenty to do. Because criminals often require *jalap* as much as hard labour; the charge of the Jail is entrusted to him. What that entails, few outsiders understand. It is not merely a duty of casual inspection with the liability of being called out to suppress an *émeute* superadded,—it involves a practical acquaintance with oil-pressing, stone-breaking, and the art of weaving. Your Jail Superintendent must know to a *chitack* what quantity of oil prisoner Ram Sing ought to get out of the measure of linseed poured into his rude-wooden mill, whose ponderous pestle goes round at the impulse of three fellow-convicts; and must determine judiciously what amount of flogging will most effectually correct Ram Sing's laziness without unduly swelling the record of stripes. This same Rhadamanthic necessity goes with him into the stone-breaking yard. He must make stone-breaking *pay*, and yet not be too lavish with the cane. Perhaps Khuda Baksh, convict of the 3rd class, has hidden a twist of 'baccy under his bedstead, and requires the discipline of the triangle before he will confess which warder it was that gave it him: or Mussammut Moti in the female ward has been screaming all night, and needs to have her hair cut under medical superintendence as a cautionary measure. Then, there are the piles of daily registers showing every detail that can be imagined (even to

the number of pinches of salt in each prisoner's mess), which have to be checked and initialled; for the departmental head is one of the high priests of the goddess Numeria, of whom we have heard, and is zealous in her worship. The stranger may feel saddened at seeing Hippocrates-Galen harnessed to such a humble go-cart as this; but the Civil Surgeon is not proud, as I said before. The Jail brings him in an extra Rs. 50 a month; and in these hard times the money is not to be despised. Has he not children who are perpetually wearing out their brass-tipped shoes on the gravel? From the Jail-gate—glorious with a police-guard which prods the sky with its bayonets at the word "Present arms!" to him passing—his jolting bullock *tonga* takes him to the hospital. This is a bare whitewashed building with some *charpoys* in one room, and an *almirah* filled with medicine jars in another. The oily Baloo collects him at the door, and shows the plasters he has put on the legs and arms of the in-patient. Then the prescription for the constable's baby has to be made up, which is painfully effected by hoisting out the heavy jars from the cupboard and bringing in the small jars in tinkling chorus. Let us hope, that there is no *post mortem* case on hand, and that the Doctor can drive straight away to his *chota hazri* at the D. S. P.'s.

If the D. S. P. does not like the work, or has quarrelled with the D. C. on some point of cabbage-culture, the charge of the public garden rests with the Civil Surgeon. This is a good arrangement; for being something of a botanist he can glibly entertain a visitor with those Latin names for the rarer plants which the D. S. P. sometimes fails to find in *Firminer*. He is supposed, too, to have a chemical and practical acquaintance with *manures*, owing to his experience in the Jail garden. As the badminton ground is in the garden, he is commonly given charge, too, of the apparatus of that game; and every evening he joins cheerfully in its airy amusement with the D. C.'s wife for his partner, and the D. C. and the D. S. P.

against him. If, in the excitement of the sport, he leaps backward into the adjoining water-channel, he comes out again smiling and jocular, and the mishap affords everyone amusement. In the cold season, he goes on vaccination-tour; and thousands of little children are brought unto him to have their arms punctured and touched with lymph. He notes the filthy state of the villages; and annually writes admirable suggestions as to sanitary improvements which cannot possibly be carried out. In fact, all the Board of Guardians are at one with him; that it would be a good thing if sweepings were carried outside the villages, and the spillings of wells carefully drained away; but the difficulty is to organize the practice of these sanitary plans without the sanction of legal penalties for omission.

Thus, like the "simple peasant, Isaac Ashton," "to pomp and pageantry in nought allied," the Civil Surgeon is not only the most contented and mildly industrious member of the Board of Guardians, but a right good fellow into the bargain. Really, if he will only abstain from giving you medicine, you are not quite certain that his cheerful voice and obstinate incredulity as to the fact of your illness, does not do you as much good as you can ever expect to get from a Doctor.

OCTOBER.

THIS is St. Martin's Spring : no buds appear,
But a more gentle breeze begins to blow,
And, like a herald with a trumpet clear,
Calls up our garrison to hear the foe.

II.

" Come forth afield ! " it says, " for peace is made :
 The black-browed tempest and the fiery sun
 Are feebled quite : their sharp assaults are stayed
 And men may range abroad with spear and gun."

III.

To prick the fat boar from his brambly lair,
 To stalk the black buck through the standing corn,
 To drop the duck, the snipe, the bustard rare,
 To hunt the jackal to the winded horn !

IV.

And, when the lust of limb is satisfied,
 To lax the heart bencath a lordly tree,
 To drink the free air of the champagne wide,
 And dream what dreams of joy by day may be !

THE PADRE.*

CHURCHES in this country look neither picturesque nor comfortable. There is a public works freshness about them which mars their attempts at Gothic age ; and they are not in harmony with their squalid surroundings. One feels that the pine-apple dome of the Hindu temple is more suggestive of worship than are the flying buttresses and the corrugated iron of our House of Prayer.

In like manner, when one meets a Bishop in apron and gaiters upon the glowing *maidan*, one feels a shock of incongruity and sorrow. It is not the dress alone, it is the wreck of associations. By the breaking up of his historic back-ground, the prelate has become ridiculous. Wynds and closes should be behind him, and behold the huts of Dherpoora !

* Chaplain.

One sometimes wonders whether it would not be more fitting if he went abroad here in his preaching habit of white lawn. There is something in common between the surplice and the simple tunic of the country.

One's memory of the apostle-pictures on the illustrated texts of one's youth is that Paul and Barnabas were clad in white linen on this wise. Call it *dhoti* or *toga*, its folds fall always the same.

But where are the poor unto whom the apostles preached? They are in the huts of Dherpoora. They are unbelievers, as in the apostolic times; but they are not sought out in their alleys by the modern apostles. It is too hot; and the gift of tongues is wanting. They are made over for visitation to the native Catechist.

The church of the Humdrum District is a much buttressed little building, with an iron roof and a stone extinguisher, which was meant for a belfry. But the bell was too big for it; and so they hung it up under a wooden roof in the compound. Every Sunday morning a native Christian jangles it painfully, and the Board of Guardians come together for baking penance within the oven-like edifice. The D. G. reads the prayers, and the others murmur responses in the intervals of mopping.

The Padre lives many miles away, in the head-quarters station. Twice or thrice a year he pays Humdrum a visit. It is a great occasion. The box containing the altar-plate has to be got out of the Treasury, where the *khazanchi* disentombs it from its resting-place between the opium chests and the stamps *almirah*. It is lucky if the key has not been lost. Then a notice is circulated of the hours of ministration; which are generally threefold the ordinary, in order to make up for lost opportunities. Some times a dark *khansamah*-like brother in holy orders accompanies the Padre, and makes himself useful in setting out the table, or if the little vestry door has got jammed through disuse, he is sent through the

window to open it. The native Catechist waits outside the church after service, and takes the Padre to his quarters in the scrai, where he keeps his stock of mission-books and several breeds of fowls. He makes a present of some eggs to his spiritual superior, and complains volubly of the depredations made by godless Madrassoo servants upon his hen-coops. He then passes to an account of his doings in the bazaars. He mentions sadly that, being a Sikh, he cannot make himself understood by the Mahrathi-speaking populace, although he thinks he has some success with the sallow Mahomedans who lounge around the *madduk* shop. He is a grey-bearded, intelligent old man, with shining teeth revealed in a perpetual smile; and being of a temperament little ruffled by want of success in his work, he spends much of his time in gently combing his thin locks in the sun. He does not tell the Padre this; but communicates such details of "interesting cases" as he is able to give, as his contribution to the Annual Report on the mission, which must sooner or later be written. For religion, too, is annually reported on, in this country of reports and reporters.

It is but a couple of years ago that a particularly "interesting case" called for the Padre's attention. A decrepit convert finding himself an outcast in consequence of his conversion, was in straits how to keep his solitary house in order. At last he found an old woman as decrepit as himself and as friendless, whom he duly converted and had her christened,— "Jane." The pair lived contentedly together for some time, till the Catechist told them they were "living in sin." It was necessary that they should be married. The old man bought a copper ring, and waited for the coming of the Padre. Then Jacob and Jane were solemnly united in matrimony, the copper ring slipping loosely on to Jane's withered finger. The ceremony seems to have overtaxed the feeble pair; for, a few months after it was performed, it fell to the Catechist's lot to procure a

cart from the D. C., and to carry their remains to the cemetery, for Christian interment.

Beyond incidents of this kind, there is little to interest the Padre in the bazaar; and he returns gladly to his European flock. He is a social, happy-tempered man, and does not intrude his office upon the persons he visits. In this respect he shines superior to those vagrant clericals who are not of the Established Church, but who sometimes invade its sacred edifices in clouted shoon and unclean linen. They breakfast with you, and then pick a bone with your morality. Sooner or later, you are obliged to show them the door. This want of *savoir vivre* on their part is probably due to the fact that, from an earnest desire to realize scriptural ideals, they spend most of their time in the wilds, far away from civilized resort. The Padre's experience has taught him that among the civilian portion, at least, of his congregations, latitude of view on religious matters is a thing not to be combated with any advantage in private, although it may be gently denounced from the pulpit on holy days. His energy takes refuge in scientific researches, which sometimes lend him a missile for his Sunday attacks on materialism. In recognition of the superior faith shown by the military, —a faith which has possibly something to do with a soldier's liking for discipline and for a clearly-mapped procedure towards a fixed objective, he sometimes allows a Colonel or a Major to take his place at the reading desk or in the pulpit. The clanking sword, the martial bearing, and the precise utterance of the harnessed reader, give *éclat* to this alliance of the church with the army, and cannot fail (he thinks) to impress the unbelieving man in *mufti* who listens in gloomy silence to this Cromwellian act.

The time when we least like the Padre is when the Eurasians, who swarm about his door, quote his name as a beggar's recommendation of their petition: and the time when we most like the Padre is when he is playing lawn-tennis, or after a

cheerful dinner. The last bloom of the broadcloth then disappears, and we are face to face with our human brother of like joy and of like passions as we are, hearty, gay, forgetful of that sad scheme of eternity which stiffens the lips of so many Christian men, and which (to borrow an idea from Carlyle) often converts both preacher and disciple into mere devotees of "umbilical introspection."

THE TIN.

I.

Pass thy hand across the strings,
Love, and wake
Tender memories of sweet
English springs,
When such showers refreshed the earth
As now break,
And no thought of summer heat
Marred our mirth !

II.

We, like children, were at play—
Burning skies .
Had not chased with feverous stress
Youth away ! .
Now thy cheek is pale and lean,
But thine eyes .
Flash an eloquence which says
“ Life is keen ! ”

• III

Let thy voice in sweet accord
Sing with mine—
“ We will cross the sea and tread
English sward ”—
Stroll, as lovers, hand in hand,
Wife, and dine
Where the trees of Richmond spread
Odours bland !

IV.

All the happy days we knew
When we wed,
Shall be born again and win
Fond review !
Pause a moment !—here a doubt
Lifts its head —
Do you think, my dear, the “tin”
Will hold out ?

PART III.



SOCIAL.

I.

On plains parched to sereness, in dust and in drearness,
Begirt by the frown of the iron-browed hills,
Aye moil'ng and swinking, must I still be thinking
Of judgments and audits, of issues and bills ?

II.

By rocks that beleaguer, where moulders the *regur*,*
A bird drops a seed, and a fair tree is sown—
So, o'er the lapsed gladness in life's orb'ng sadness
A fancy flits lightly and laughter is thrown !

III.

The bare hills at even are tinged from heaven
With purple and softness - can trifles vex *then* ?
Nay, life is new-whetted, day's fume is out-fretted,
And night brings a balm for the sorrows of men !

* Black cotton-soil.

PART III. SOCIAL.

BESIEGED.

OUR enemy, the sun, after a brief suspension of hostilities, during which we ranged the open-like children out of school, has again drawn his linos about us, and compelled us to retire within our gates. Close is the siege, and weary the trial. Year after year we have endured it, but familiarity with hardship has not bred contempt. We know that we shall be weaker and wearier when the annual investment is over, and alas ! for the roses in the cheeks of the fair. But we bear the inevitable with resignation ; and the ladies, as happens again and again in those sieges which belong to actual war, display a fortitude which was scarcely to be looked for. To one who takes in imagination a bird's-eye view of the country at this season, the scene is a strange one. All over the plains of India are dotted garrisons of British men and women, stoutly holding out behind their barricaded doors and windows against the fiery onslaught of the day. Only at even and at early morn dare they venture abroad for a brief reconnaissance. Only here and there a thick-skulled fighter in a morion of pith, follows the tiger or his woodland calling, in defiance of the fiery glow. At rare intervals stand out hill refuges—cool retreats on which the chosen few gather about their local patriarch, and escape the flood of fire. Of the dotted garrisons, some are larger, some very small indeed—perhaps of six individuals at most. Here the hardship takes a more pitiable form. Social sympathy made even the Temple prison gay;

but how tired six people can get of each other's company, even in the most favourable field of circumstance! Put these six persons into confinement, as nearly as possible on the "separate cell" principle; exhaust them by hot airs, and starve them of incident; give them tough mutton, and fowls, and beer, and soda-water cooled by swinging, for food and drink, and see if they will make merry *r< unions* at even-tide! Probably they will quarrel, merely for the sake of the excitement which a "tiff" affords. We have heard lately a good deal about the virtues and the failings of the Anglo-Indian *mem-sahib*. In seeking for more sentimental incident, the writers have seemingly overlooked this item to her credit in the books of praise—the meek endurance by *mem-sahib* of the miseries of a little garrison on the glow-environed plains. Complacent husbands, proud of the flower they have culled on the breezy downs of home, think it small sorrow that the flower should parch and fade, till it becomes as unlike its former self as the specimen in a *hortus siccus* is like the living herb. To-day is the blooming bride, fresh from the congratulations of thronging friends and the bustle of English life: to-morrow, like the grass of the field, which is spoken of in Scripture, she is "cast into the oven." This is a hard trial for any human being; harder still in the absence of those social *divertissements* which, at least, keep the eye bright and the tongue in lively use. It may be said that conjugal society should be all in all, but the most affectionate natures must tire of the constant presentation of each other's sweetness, like a daily dish of prunes. What then? Should there be no ladies in garrison? Should celibacy be enforced? Ask the ladies themselves, and they will cry out, "No!" There's the beauty of it! They bear it all, and are cheerful; and this cheerfulness, under trial, gives them a new charm, which is more than the loveliness of visual bloom. A little watering of sympathy now and again, is all that they demand; and mostly they get it. But there is no doubt, I think, of this thing; that

the fact that many delicate lives of English women and children are each year sadly put to strain, is due to our present garrison system, and to mistaken conceptions of what that system would prove to be. We hold on to the soil of India with British tentacles at every fifty or one hundred miles. Many and many of these stations are of such desolate surroundings, that it is simply a punishment, as bad as penal servitude, to post any civilized men or women to them. These are the places where the native products of our elaborate educational system should take root as administrators, subject to the occasional visits of controlling powers. A step has been made in this direction by substituting here and there Native Assistant Surgeons for European doctors; but this way of beginning is rather cruel to the Europeans who remain. By degrees we shall have more Native Assistant Magistrates and Collectors appointed, until, at last, the English Collector or Deputy Commissioner will stand out in Juan Fernandez-like solitude—proud, lone, and beneficent, after the manner of James Brooke in Sarawak. Then he, too, will be withdrawn; and the eagle eye of the Commissioner will watch from some well-chosen eyrie, where the forces of control are gathered-in, the equable course of things. Then, and not till then, will the residence of the English in India, much diminished in numbers, cease to be a sad and unnatural phenomenon, full of distorting effects upon body and soul. It would be a miserable task to estimate, if that were possible, the amount of disgust, sorrow, querulousness, yearnings to be out of it, anathemas, anxieties, sickenings, and heart-rending farewells which each hot season generates in the plains. The country is our bread to many of us; but a few crumbs, eaten in healthy contentment in England, were better than a batch of loaves of this kind. India is a country suited to the wealthy few, and not to the many of moderate means. These latter present a sad spectacle to the intelligent Russ—the so-called conquerors of Ind

harassed for funds to send their children home, grumbling over their prospects in a country in which they have a great deal of power but very little pay, and fashed with internecine feuds, between latter-day civilians and men who "fought for the Empire in 1857!" Truly, it is a sight to "make the angels weep." Meanwhile, since it is our bread, it ill-behoves us to seek a shortening of the already scanty allowance, by urging the contraction of European employment in our own day. It is against the coming of more and more "latter-day" civilians, with wives and families, create and increase, to eat of the Dead Sea fruit of which we have tasted, that our voices are raised. For ourselves, we are as martyrs who prepare a monument of our bones to the spirit of duty, which alone sustained us during the weary months and years when we were "besieged."

UBIQUE AMOR.

I.

WHERE is Love's haunt? Among the elms and birches,
On dewy meadow lands or upland leas?
Where tender sunlight through the lilac searches,
Or where a bleak wind strikes the lichenized trees?
Finds he not fair the *Peepuls* and the *Bur* trees,
The whisper-loving *Siris* and the Palm?
By twinkling Poplars, or by moaning Fir trees
Bides he, in fear of India's fevered calm?
Ah, no!—for, late, upon a palm-crowned island,
Where tangled creepers chained the languid air,
Through the sere shade there stole a woman's smile, and,
E'en in that instant, Love himself stood there!

II.

Whence had he sprung ? From out the temple-ruin
 Which arched a sacred darkness on the height ?
 Fallen from the skies; was he those doves pursuing
 That circled coyly in the golden light ?
 Risen from the sea, which still kept laughing lowly,
 And called on all the Palms to cover him,
 Sought he to comb and dry his tresses holy
 On a lone island, for on idle whim ?
 No, not in this way had his lordship landed—
 (I asked him, rounding in his rosy ear)
 “From your own bark,” he laughed, “just as you handed
 Leila to shore, I leaped out and—*am here!*”

SUBJECTIVITY.

OUR society is divided into two parties ; and I have lately joined the ranks of the Subjectives. The famous hill of Lucretius is nothing to our position ; we are like the gods beside their nectar, and carelessly look on writhing masses of the Objectives engaged in their daily conflict with physics. We enjoy, as it were, the pleasures of opium, without endangering our health with the drug. We take delight in the doctrines of Buddha, without wishing for Nirvana. We maintain a sitting or recumbent posture, but without any leaning to ascetic practice. The limbs are relaxed, that the mind may be more at ease. We strip ourselves of all passionate veilings, and lie nakedly open to any impartial impression that may come our way. Envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness are as far from our bosom as are love and predilection. The result is, that all nature appears to us as a series of arrangements of line and colour, quite Whistlerian in variety and marvels. As

for humanity and the pranks of men and women, it is difficult to illustrate their effect on us. It is both irritating and astonishing. It is as though the dreamy musings of a hermit in a forest glade were subject to noisy interruption from the in-rush of a band of ignorant merry-makers. Even the hermit aforesaid, however, would derive a certain suggestion of pleasure from the contrast between his own state of repose and the exhausting activity of the athletes. In the same way, we are pleasantly tickled by the feats of the Objectives. The chief of these are known by the names of Tripudiation (or Trois-temps) and Sphairistike (tennis or badminton). In the practice of them they are indefatigable. Bands of music and tables of refreshments support their flagging energies. Occasionally they sit down for a few minutes' rest, their faces streaming with perspiration, fans agitating violently, and not a few looking unhappily pale from their severe exertions. Their breath restored, they are at it again. It is like the scene in the Vision of Sin—

“ Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half invisible to the view;
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody they flew ! ”

Only it must be noted that “wild grimaces” is not a universally or exactly applicable term. With a few exceptions, the faces of the performers express a firm severity which suggests the Christian martyr, or other types of high-souled endurance to the end.

The feeling of amusement which is at first generated by the spectacle of our familiar friends thus engrossingly engaged, soon melts, however, into melancholy. As the old waltzes are played over and over again, and seem to draw, as by a magic spell, the minor vortices of whirling humanity into .

their echoing maelstrom, one begins to fear that there is something banal in the diversion."

• May not the *cerebella* of the dancers become disastrously magnetised by revolution across the plane of the earth's axis? Were this to happen, would not the dancers become the musicians' slaves? In accordance with the tenets of my party, however, I refrain from dwelling on painful possibilities, and turn a languid eye to the badminton ground.

Ubi sacra sancta acutis ululatibus agitant.

Where, with piercing cries, that is to say, they whirl about the mystic weapons of their athletic cult, and, like the priest of Cybele, leap madly, breathlessly, furiously in conflict with an airy phantom that flies hither and thither, eluding their touch, while loudly sound the drum, trumpet, and fife—

Tympanum, tubæ, Cybele, tua mater initia! □

By-and-by, they are obliged to refresh themselves with tea and coffee. It is not to be supposed that we are allowed to occupy our chosen position of passive spectators of these frantic displays without remonstrance or opposition. The Objectives are a proselytising party, and cannot understand how a person can at once be happy, and refrain from joining in their feats. They taunt us with want of skill, indolence, pride, and a variety of other defects and evil qualities. But we have the advantage of being cool, which is a great pull in a tropical climate; and while mentally consigning them to Philistia, can ensure the social peace with a suave reply.

On promenade nights our amity is considerably increased, as the principles of our party do not condemn the gentle exercise of walking, provided it be not too prolonged. Yet even in this the muscular fibre of the Objectives asserts itself, and produces a kind of antagonism to our nervous quietude. Four or five robust walkers begin stepping out as if for a wager, to the considerable discomfort of the more leisurely

patrollers. They march their quick step round and round the promenade, carrying everything before them. Our minds, unable to discover the object of these precipitate progresses and circumvolutions, experience blind presages of impending collision with unknown forces, of need for hurry, of marches to far places where

“Ignorant armies clash by night ;” and a hundred other vain imaginings. It becomes impossible for us to limp round the Band any longer, and we sink into the nearest seat that is not sat all over with Philistines, to repair, as best we may, our shattered nerves.

I would go on to speak of horse-exercise ; but having recently suffered very severely through being forcibly enlisted in a squadron of Objectives under a Philistine chief, who sang to me as he hurried my horse along by the bridle—

“Rattle his bones over the stones

Only a waler the worse for the nones ! ”

I find myself unequal to the task at present. Is not “nones” a Chaucerian word ? How did he get hold of it ? I seem to have splint and spavin on the brain.

YUCCA-BELLS.

I.

HER love was like the fair spire-flower
Of the dark Yucca. High it sprang,
With silvery chimes its belfrey rang—
But one rude blast laid low the tower !

II.

And, where it stood, to hide from men
The source where such a wonder rose,
Stout blades are set in jealous rows
And keep the core from strangers’ ken.

III.

But not from Him.* While that spire stood,
 He heard what chimes were leeward blown ;
 The tale they told was still his own,
 Their harmonies resolved his mood.

IV.

Both were as one. Now silence reigns—
 The fairy bloom of love is o'er—
 But love is his for evermore,
 And her soul's grace with him remains !

FOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH A DISTRICT OFFICER.

PART I.

WHEN I called on the Collector, I found him in a little chamber at the rear of his reception-room, busily engaged in carpentering up a cart-wheel. By his side were two native *mistarisi*.* Seeing me enter, he smiled and said—"You may be surprised at finding me engaged in this sort of work, but you must learn to know how things lie. I am on the right track." "The right track to what?" I asked, with as much deference in my tone as I could throw into it. "To civilizing the people," he replied. "The arts of peace produce comfort, and comfort leisure, and leisure thought, which is but another word for education! You got a prize for political economy before you left England—did you not?" "I lost it by two marks," I answered. He sent away the *mistarisi* with the cart-wheel, and drew me into the other room. Reclined in a chair, which gave prominence to his boots, and suffered the main

* Master-artificers.

portion of his body to collapse into insignificance, the Collector looked at me very knowingly over the long wooden arm of it. "What do you think of our courts of justice," he asked; "I mean the wood-work, and not the legal procedure?" "It wants solidity," I replied, "and it seems to me that there might be a little more finish in the furniture and fittings. However, I suppose that Government has not got the money to spend on such matters, and that we must be content with native carpentry in its raw state." "Nothing of the kind," was the quick rejoinder. "Government has plenty of money to spend. Look, for instance, at that fine school-house in the New Bazaar, and at the hospital, two stories high, beyond it, and, at the many-arched *serai** by the railway station. I tell you, this plainness of judicial buildings is a very fair compliment to the officers who work in them. It shows a faith in impalpable results as opposed to the rude passion for being able to set hands upon work done. Government mutely says to judicial officers—'We need not surround your doings with an efflorescence of red brick, stone corbels, and mansard roofs. We only do that sort of thing when we are afraid that the native schoolmasters and the apothecaries are not getting on.'"

"Decking the hive to attract the bees," I suggested. "Bees bring honey," he said, "and sick men and scholars don't. The simile would be more applicable to a beautiful court-house. Consider, now, as a first step towards understanding the present economical administration of the country, the following remarkable theorem to which Government has pinned its faith:—'The colourless and diluent product which men call progress, naturally precipitates itself in the form of bricks and mortar.' When you have got to be a full-power Magistrate, you will never rise further until you have built a town-hall or two. These edifices are staring testimonies of your power of

* Caravanserai, or native rest-house.

getting in 'voluntary subscriptions,' and of so pushing civilization ahead. When the Chief Commissioner goes on tour, it is very difficult for him to detect any growth of intelligence in the ugly faces of villagers who have been learning how to make round cart-wheels; but a square building hits his sight at once. You can stroke a work of brick or stone, you know, and say—'Well, here's something, at all events, as an outcome of all our labours and taxing: this speaks itself to earth and sky as an assured result: there is no fear that any mauling of statistics will make us disbelieve that *this* is 'here'!' It is true that a succeeding officer of the Executive may knock the building down as unnecessary, or as inappropriate to the spot, but this is one of the accidents of administration."

The eloquacious Collector paused here, and called for brandy and soda. While he was lighting a cigar, I was miserably turning over in my head a thousand thoughts. "Come," I said, "these instances of our care for their welfare must needs have an effect upon the people. Acquaintance with comfortable hospitals, comfortable *scrabis*, and noble town-halls, must perforce tend to raise their conceptions of life to a higher standard?" "Comfort!" ejaculated my superior officer between the puffs of his long Trich. "Do you think that a peasant is not more comfortable in a small mud cottage than in the long and lofty corridor of a *pucka* mansion? As for disinterestedness, the natives are sharp enough to see that it is to please ourselves, and not them, that we build these edifices of European model. We English people have our own notions of comfort, and would be quite unhappy if we had not plenty of solid blocks of masonry studded over the place, with a cheerful, staunch look about them, and a suggestion of Clapham in their gable ends." There was a brief pause. I (enthusiastic dolt that I was!) could not help feeling dispirited by what I had heard. A bright thought at length struck me. "Are we not right in making ourselves comfortable?" I asked. If

you had seen the Collector then, you would have thought that he had gone mad. He suddenly leapt from his seat, and smote me sharply on the shoulder with the action of a man who has joyfully found the thing he sought. "You have hit the vein," he said; "let us make haste and get out the ore! The position which we hold in this country is not that of missionaries, but of conquerors, with a humane disposition towards the vanquished. In the first place we (very sensibly) begin by making ourselves comfortable: in the second place, we turn our thoughts towards spreading the comforts of civilization among the natives. Missionaries may be content with rude *jhopras*,* or with waxed-cloth umbrellas; but the humane conqueror will scarcely be satisfied with buildings that are not *pucka*, and with habitations that give no delight. The missionary who leaves but the ashes of a camp-fire behind him is in no danger of mistaking the relics of his personality for signs of progress in the tribes he has taught; but the civilizing conqueror who pleases his fancy with building is not unapt to mistake model school-houses for flourishing education, and tasteful town-halls for a municipal spirit that thrives." Stopping to take breath, the Collector suddenly burst out laughing, and, looking me straight in the face, said—"Do you know what is at the bottom of all this tirade?" "I cannot conceive." "Why, only last week I was about to purchase a clock for use in my hall of justice; but I was informed that a clock was not an 'ordinary necessary' in a Collector's Office, and that I must obtain sanction. On the other hand, I was permitted to spend Rs. 500 on a town cross, in the market place, without obtaining any sanction. The paradox would puzzle me (for I do not quite see that a market cross is an 'ordinary necessary'), but for my perception of the fact to which I have already referred. An unbelieving generation seeketh after a sign" (the Collector rose and held out his hand to me). "Progress, in the judicial de-

* Huts.

parts of the service, is manifested by codes and the reputation of its officers. There is no need, therefore, to surround the Missionary-Maid Justice with any show of circumstance. A band-box does well enough to keep her Bible and balances in. Progress of education, sanitary knowledge, and a spirit of self-culture among the mass of the people is not yet quite manifest. Therefore, in order to keep the spirit of the age from scolding at us, we are obliged to make a display of empty but gaily-decorated godowns, in token of the stores that are gathering, and are to come. For my part, I do not see why some provision should not be made for music among the other *etceteras*. With this idea I have lately got up plans from the office of an architect in Calcutta for the building of a Popular Concert Hall for native performers. If I had not an engagement to-night I would ask you to stay to dinner, and look over these plans; as it happens, I must put you off till next week. Good-bye: on Tuesday evening we may have some more talk about cart-wheels."

A GOLDEN LATTICE.

I.

I lie in the grass at her feet
And the artful air,
Tossing her golden hair,
Makes the blown tresses to meet
In a lattice fair!

II.

I peep through this lattice, and see
Such a gleam arise
That I marvel and make surmise—
It is a new Dawn I see,
Or her arch blue eyes?

CONVERSATIONS WITH A DISTRICT OFFICER.[“]

PART II.

“MINE is a policy of Raptas,”* said the Magistrate. He was standing on the bank of a *nullah*. Close at hand rose two arches of a once treble-spanned bridge. The indifferent floods of August had neglected the design of the builder, and made with all their might for that arch alone which stood nearest the right bank. The wing-wall had yielded to this collective onset, and with it went all the earth-work of the road behind, leaving a great gap. When the rains were over, the country-carts had made themselves a loop-track over the bed of the *nullah*. The bridge stood useless, looking a melancholy example of a noble purpose futilised by circumstance.

“I never build a bridge until I am pressed to it by the urgency of popular needs. I never build a bridge and throw it open as a seduction to traffic. So long as irregular water-bursts and a black cotton soil render possible the need of an extra arch each season, I prefer to temporise with an Irish causeway. When coolies are crossing the flooded Raptas, with bales on their heads, and when I am waited on for that end by deputations of pushing *banias*† with tears in their eyes, I begin to think of spending the public money in trying a fall with nature.”

I, the listener to this speech, had been recently appointed Secretary to the Local Committee. Having read up Rankine and the Roorkee Treatise on Bridges, I had come out, full of the spirit of engineering, to see this subject for my trial of skill. I felt disappointed, and said—“Of course we should

* Irish causeways.

† Petty grain-dealers, or shopkeepers.

not be too hasty ; but ought not the resources of a country to be developed ? ”

“ Yes ; and husbanded, too,” responded the Collector. Without more words, he mounted his horse and led the way across the stream. Passing from between the double file of mango trees that lined the highway, we came to a large building built in the form of a square. It was of *pucka* brick, well plastered, and had been carefully tiled. Some of the tiles, being loosened by the weather, had fallen from the roof, and the black and green stains upon what had once been white wash, gave the place a shabby air. No signs of life in it were to be seen, save the bouncing run of some bushy-tailed squirrels, and the jerking flight of lizards.

“ What place is this ? ” I asked. “ It seems like a deserted monastery.” “ This is the companion picture to the abandoned bridge you saw just now,” was the reply. “ Ever-as the water provokingly refused to go through the arches which were made for it, so the pilgrims of the dusty highway refused the shelter of this obvious *serai*. He who planted the mango trees was a wiser patron.” “ It must be obstinacy or prejudice,” I said, thinking of the travellers. “ It was a touch of the Arabian Nights’ madness,” said the Magistrate, thinking of the builder. “ I do not perfectly understand.” “ A well-used road is a well-used road, and, if there is no prospect of a more convenient track being shortly opened, you may plant mangoes all along it with a pleasant certainty that you are doing a really useful and benevolent thing. Where people will halt and rest themselves, however, is a matter determined by other influences than the generous wishes of a Government official. Some local rulers imagine that they have succeeded directly to the magical powers with which their youthful beliefs associated Eastern despotism ; they raise a palace in a night, and expect that by the same charm they will find it populous. In the end, the mystic mantle appears

to have missed the shoulders, for the palace goes to ruin, and there is a long bill to pay.

"Do you see any writing on the peeled wall there?" I was taken aback, and said—"No, unless the lizards be scribbling something." "Look a little closer, and you will see traced, as it were by a divine hand, these words: 'The principle of natural development neglected!' The *serai* had not that which all useful buildings possess—a history of gradual growth, from lower form to higher. It did not begin with the clustering here of travellers under plain boughs, and the hoisting of ragged cloths upon crossed poles for shelter. It did not pass through the stage of coarse thatch and wooden uprights. It was born of the brain of a district officer, and became a *pucka* building before any one thought of praying for it. Whereby, the stony stare of it is such that none will enter in. And now," said the Magistrate and Collector (he was both), "if you have paid a tithe of the attention which the gravity of the subject requires"—"I know, I know what you mean" (the cry came eagerly and hastily from me); "the indifference from all this is, that though progress has its symbols, yet symbols do not constitute progress; that those forms and structures which are not the natural outcome of the needs of a people are but obstacles to their real advance, that Municipal Committees, for instance—"

"Stop!" broke in the Collector, laughingly; "if you go on at this rate I shall have nothing to talk to you about when you come to dine with me to-morrow night. This is Ercles' vein, indeed; you are the aptest pupil—"

"That Municipal Committees have no independent history in this country, but being suddenly constituted by the *fiat* of Government, the native citizens, who are members, show like puppets in a play which does not interest. Whereby that sideaim of their author, that a healthy public spirit should be nurtured in them, is baulked with an opposite effect. The

habit of saying '*Bahut achha*' to every suggestion of an English Vice-President (born of the consciousness of puppethood) is depraving; and the silent ignoring with which their crude ideas are greeted is not stimulant to their mental growth. Liberty to express his opinion without correction or comment is by no means a sure way of engendering enlightenment in a speaker."

"You speak like a book," said the Collector, "and I will venture in the spirit of your last sentence to enlighten the text with a commentary. The object of the Government in respect of these Committees was somewhat different from what you suppose. They wished in their administration of township affairs to retain some *rappoart* with the feelings of the citizens. It is better not to shock prejudices when the doing of such a thing can be avoided, and the warning voices of representative men may often prove a safeguard."

"But what if the voices speak idly—for ever crying 'All is well,' when all is not well; is not the danger greater than before? What, if your representative man be a cringing *bania*, with no idea beyond that of keeping his money-bags intact, and his conduct from displeasing the *Sirkar*, though his neighbours starve for it?"

"There is nothing profitable for doctrine to be got out of him," said the Collector, turning his horse to make an inspection of the tiles and *malgas*.* I could hear him murmuring—"Teak-wood costs two rupees the cubic foot, could make excellent railings for my court-house out of these—only I darena't." When he got back to where I stood, he said—"It is an undeniable truth, young man, that, in order to find independent advisers among the people of to-day, one must have been careful to foster independence of thought in the masses in former days. The principle of natural

* Roofing-poles.

growth requires this to be so. You were speaking a few minutes ago of progress; how do you define progress in its social sense?" "Advancement in civilization." "That is, not a definition, but an alternative phrase denoting the same fact. You may begin by determining that it has something to do with thought, and you may go on to define it as the widening of the realm of independent thought. This may or may not be accompanied by the gathering of Municipal Committees and the building of town-halls; and it may or may not lead to the adoption of chairs, and knives and forks, in domestic life. If we wish to estimate the advance in civilization which a people have made under a foreign Government, we must not allow ourselves to be deceived by any show of railway stations, post-offices, school-buildings, and the like; we must remember that humane conquerors are often in the habit of raising such things with an eye to their own comfort, and the gratifying of homely predilections. We must look a little further, and listen not a little; we must observe the habits and hearken to the conversation of many members of the prosperous classes. If land-holders, merchants, and long-pursed shop-keepers are generally illiterate, and ill-informed of matters beyond the circle of their private interest, we must conclude that, when the imperial legions go, there will be little of the empire left but ruins." "O don't let us speak of the imperial legions going," said I; "those legionaries are the pleasantest fellows." He laughed, and we rode out of the desolate court-yard, where our horses hoof-beats made a hollow sound. Passing rapidly along the roadway towards the town, we came upon a brand-new school-house of best brick, with barge-boards and eaves-boards of carved wood, and the date of its building graven in stone. The Collector reined in his horse and alighted; and a shabby *mualim** came

* Teacher.

from within and made his best *salaam*. Ragged and unkempt urchins, with wooden tablets covered with chalk figures in their hands, stole gingerly to the doorway.

"This," said the Collector gravely to me, as he turned on his heel at the threshold, "is an institution for helping on Progress through the villages, by lessening the friction of the wheels of her rustic cart. Plenty of English grease is employed. That other kind of wheel on which you saw me employed, belonged to the car, or carriage, of the goddess, in which she rides when she pays visits of State to the gentry. A slight error had been made. While the wheels of the cart were being built lightly as for a carriage, the carriage wheels were left as heavy and clumsy as those of a cart. This I was attempting to correct. Don't say anything to this teacher here about cart-wheels, for he won't understand you, but ask him about his pupils."

The *muallim*, being interrogated, said—"Alas! your honor, the parents still say that it is like slaying their sons to send them to school. They are so prejudiced. They think that learning is all very well for the rich, but that the poor man's son is made useless and idle by knowledge. And the worst of it is," continued the schoolmaster, "that the rich men's children don't come here to learn; they refuse to squat down with the paupers."

"It is indeed a most deplorable thing," exclaimed the hypochondriac Collector, "that when we have thrown the feast of learning open, none but the lame and the halt will come in, and they only on compulsion. It is a bad thing for a people that knowledge should spread first among the inferior ranks, and not pass gradually down from higher class to lower. The instructed plebeians despise the ignorant men of birth, and the men of birth look down on knowledge as vulgar. While prostitutes attend your girls' schools, is it not to be expected that women of virtue will shrink from a reputation

for learning? It seems to me that the education of those of lowly station is a small matter in comparison with the importance of informing those of high degree. Enlightenment, commonly generates a desire to do good; and it is a misfortune when the willingness and the power are divorced. At present, the men of capital and the land-owners are mostly sitting in silly darkness, while the medy men, whose vision has been cleared, are struggling fiercely for positions in life. It is time that we should open the eyes of the wealthy blind." "But how is this to be done?" was the quick question which caught him on the threshold. "In my district, to a great extent, by personal influence," said the Collector,—saying which he entered the school. I, having work elsewhere that morning, rode on.

PAGHAL.

I.

IT is the Feast of Laughter—
 Laugh first, be sober after,
 Laugh out thy fill of glee!
 Laugh madly and yet dafter
 Till every joist and rafter
 Rings back thy laugh to thee!

II.

IT is the Feast of Fooling—
 Fool first, then think of schooling
 Thyself to gravity!
 Quick, keep thy wits from cooling—
 From reason's despot ruling
 Fun sets the senses free!

III.

It is the Feast of Gladness—
Of Youth's midsummer-madness,
And thou Mirth's Queen shalt be !
All echoes of all sadness,
All images of badness
Before thy laugh shall flee !

IV.

We feast to-day, to-morrow,
In scorn, in scorn of sorrow—
And this our dance of glee
A subtler sense doth borrow.
From some far morrow's sorrow
And memories to be !

CONVERSATIONS WITH A DISTRICT OFFICER.

PART III

It was at the Collector's dinner-table that I first met Captain Vigilant. He struck me as being clean-shaven and well-drilled, as having a flexible smile and fixed ideas, as being a humane conqueror with a terrible hatred of "nigs." With such a force did his quiet declarations of animosity to, and his suggestions for tyrannical treatment of, the mild Hindoo strike me (a simple youth still moist-lipped from the milk of English philanthropy), that I half shuddered as he spoke. I thought of a thumb-screw imbeded in roses, and could see the pink petals edging over the agony of the iron's prey.

With the wine, our talk fell on the transfer of land. The Captain was suavely annunciative of ruin. "It is a fatal po-

licy," he said; "the little loyalty that there ever was in the country is dying out. What can you expect when the old landholders are being fast ousted by a crowd of *banias*?* It makes me melancholy to think of what we may be coming to. Of course these people should not be allowed to touch the land."

"It is a strange thing to me," said the Collector, "that while at home there is a growing cry that land is artificially hindered from coming into the market, here in India a cry has sprung up that land must be artificially hindered from coming there. This latter cry, apparently, is born of the notion that all *banias* are rascals, and all old proprietors excellent men. It is true that many of the rascals by thrift and industry have gathered their wealth, and that many of the excellent men by prodigality did squander theirs; but what smacks of the ledger must needs be flung out for what savors of the Realty."

"A great responsibility rests on the shoulders of the *malguzar*,† said I (recalling a passage in some report which I had read), "who has contracted with the Government on the one hand, and with his ryots ‡ on the other; and it is anomalous that he should be able to shift his obligations to the shoulders of the first man who sues out a long bill against him."

"Excellently delivered," said the Collector. "A bumper of claret for so fine a sentence!"

I replied in a period equally rounded:—"Folly and incompetence in a place of trust will naturally develop anomalies, and it is better that the bearer of public responsibilities, who has become encumbered in the discharge of them by the pressure

* Shop-keepers.

† Landlord.

‡ Tenants.

of obligations purely private, should resign his post to a man less shackled and more careful."

"Careful!" ejaculated the Captain. "These *banias* are not careful! I sometimes think that a little of the lash, judiciously administered, would perhaps make them so. They do not *salaam* to one in the bazaars now!"

"After all, what does one fear?" continued the *banda-nawaz** of the Zillah cutcherry †—"that the men who have made their all through British protection of trade will be colder supporters than the descendants of fighting men whom British conquest tamed? A *bania*, it is true, may be incapable of gratitude, but his disposition is naturally towards peace."

"*Banias* peaceful! They are the most quarrelsome people in the world," said the military man. "The other day, in the bazaar, I saw one shopkeeper strike another in the heat of controversy about two pice on the debit side. A crowd of antagonistic sympathizers assembled; and there might have been a general disturbance but for the discovery of a thief at work on the grain bags."

"Exactly," said the Collector, "an appreciation of the value of private property, as such, is the best safeguard against popular commotion. I may go on to remark that the greedy shopkeeper is not unknown in England, and that his base frauds and adulterations there have been matters of comment ere now. Let us remember, however, that growth is always from lower forms to higher. The wholesale dealer has risen out of the pedlar, and the merchant is but a development of the carrier. Between Sam Slick and George Peabody there is certain social interval; but acuteness in looking after private interests is the link between the two. Acuteness in the raw state is vulpine and even lupine; by a widening of the range of ideas only, it

* "Cherisher of servants : an honorific term of address.

† District Court.

becomes manly. This widening of the range of ideas is enabled by wealth, which gives time for education, general thought, and the looking about one. The process of gain, therefore, however disagreeable to the by-standers, is to be respected for its ultimate instrumentalities, and in the dirty *bania* of to-day we may learn to behold the liberal land-owner of the future."

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated the Captain, "there would be no more *shikar*!"

"But," said I, "I fear that the spirit of gain might play banefully over the interest of the ryots, sucking the folk dry even, and casting them away. There would be no bond of attachment between landlord and tenant, because their relationship would have no history."

"Better so than have a history of relationship characterized by indifference or exaction on the one side and poverty on the other. The old proprietors are not such models of enlightened landlordism, but that we can afford to lose a few of them."

"A nightmare were better than this," said the Captain to me; "to be heavily visited in one's reveries of the day by the ogre-like phantom of a *bania* turned liberal land-owner is a gruesome penance for such a man as our friend here. If I were he, I would try incantations, and sing coaxingly—

"Come to me in my dreams, for then
By day I shall be well again!"

"I have heard," said I, "that down in Lower Bengal the purse-made land-owners are not a class of men to be admired. One pictures to oneself what would be the result, at home, of a change which should put all Wardour Street in the country seats of the Midlands."

"There are many Jews of the class who could buy estates if they chose," replied the Collector; "but the fact that they do not do so is significant. It is a mistake to suppose that every greedy trader who has a land mortgage-deed in his possession

is hungry to step into the shoes of the manorial lord. Land is a commodity encumbered with many cares. Gathering rents is a less exciting and a less profitable occupation than buying in the lowest market and selling in the highest.. Teeka Ram, retired upon his warily bought acres, has a less cheerful eye than Teeka Ram squatted at his old shop-front."

"He reminds me of a retired brewer trying to ignore the existence of beer," said the Captain; "he puts on magnificent clothes, talks of his *gaun*,* covets to become an Honorary Magistrate, and drives in a varnished bullock-coach. Certainly, I am reminded of a few friends at home."

"Some are wise, and some are foolish," said the Collector; "but even the foolish, in their anxiety to behave with propriety in a new position, are more ready to accept suggestions than the men of unawakened wits. Readiness to accept suggestions is a step on the stairs of progress."

"Can't you fancy," said the Captain to me, "that the Collector often makes very poetic and finely associative suggestions? For instance, while he is exhibiting his favourite cart-wheel, will he not be sure to address the gentry on the subject of the Wheel of Fortune (probably a cart wheel, you know)? With what a readiness they would appreciate his rendering of the celebrated verse—*turn and we smile, the lords of many lands!*"

"I confess to a weakness for carpentering," said the Collector, "but there is an underlying idea. I like to forget, now and then, that I am either Collector or Magistrate, and to imagine myself a practical suggestor of plain reforms. My assistant *mistarist*† will communicate to their brethren what they have learnt, in a dull unreasoning way. Were the gentry of the age sufficiently intelligent, I might lecture to them on the subject, as you suggest, and point out that the economy

* Village (*ganw*.)

† Master-artificers.

of knowledge, for instance, is illustrated by the spokes of a wheel ; but seeing them as they are, men ill able to grasp abstract ideas, however quick to a concrete example, I prefer to scheme for making their sons have broader views. What a help it were to Government to have a generation of magnanimous gentry—to say nothing of the pleasure of being able to start social science in a *mulakat*.* " And so fill the land with sentimental orators ? Already the air rings with their outpourings in University-English. When the ancient Britons, under the Roman rule, took to speechifying at Lyons and elsewhere, is it recorded that their countrymen were thereby made more practically self-helping ? "

" The process of fermentation always develops more or less of froth," said the Collector. " It will work off in time, Captain. Meanwhile, seeing many a rich man's son in my district receiving but a paltry education at the hands of a private *munshi* on Rs. 8 a month, I reason strongly against such unwise-dom. If, I say, you object to Government schools, at least establish efficient private ones among yourselves. Aman Singh, of Raunpur, whom I respect as a man prompt to seize upon sensible suggestions, has got three or four of his neighbours to join him in paying Rs. 50 or Rs. 60 a month to a well-qualified teacher, who takes their sons into training together. The joint education is of a superior kind to that which was taught separately. I get some of the educated young men who turn out of Government schools and hang about cutcherry doors, to translate popular English works about food, wealth, population, cultivation of the soil, and the uses of capital ; and these translations are read and explained to the students of Aman Singh's academy. Also I send a certain clever *mistari*, who learned his work in an English workshop out here, to show to the lads the use of various tools ; and

* Conversational visit.

they have stirred up the *mistaris* of their own towns to come and learn of him. Perhaps these efforts of mine are empty, and the youths had better have been learning to read the well-known description of the Banyan-tree in English, but—”

“ And the wretched ignorant *mazduris*,*” said I; “ what do you do for them ? ”

“ I am going to let knowledge trickle down to them through kindness,” said the Collector. “ In the first place, I cultivate a wise kindness in those who have a power over them.”

At the end of this long discourse, Captain Vigilant heaved a deep sigh, and, mournfully shaking his head at the Collector, exclaimed :—“ Gracious Heaven ! the spirit of Sir Thomas More sits heavily upon you, my poor friend. Listen to me, and believe what I say. This Utopianism will bring you to no good. The greatest optimist has not yet been heard to speak of kindness ‘ trickling down to coolies.’ I see well that a military training is needful for civil officers. You will never be of any use to India until you are converted to my doctrine, *viz.*, that flogging is the only thing good for the niggers of this country.”

“ You are of the standing army,” said the Collector, smiling.

“ And you are of the police,” rejoined the Captain. “ Magistrates are but the necessary complements of a patrolling force.”

“ But I am something more than an arbiter of order,” said the Collector. “ When I leave the Bench and go a-marching I become an Agent of Progress.”

“ God bless you for it ! ” said the Captain.

We lit cigars, and went out into the open.

* Labourers.

A SPRAY.

I.

On a rude rock stair,
Palm fringed and broken,
She from wild stock there
Plucked a green token,
Set it where throbbed her
Heart with mirth's wilng,
And, while I robbed her,
Looked away smiling.

II.

Night was the fairer
For that morn's laughter—
There will be rarer
Gladness hereafter.
On her life's journey
Mirth be within her—
Death is the tourney
Where I will win her !

CONVERSATIONS WITH A DISTRICT OFFICER.

PART IV.

THE Collector sat in the door of his tent. Coming under the cool shade of mango-boughs, I alighted from my horse with glee and saluted him. "Captain Vigilant has been out shooting, and has not shot anything," he said. "Hear this extract from a letter of his just received:—'They are all the same. Is there anything in the solar ray which blazes on this plain here to touch the minds of men and make them

incapable of freshness? Must all regard for the graces of life crumble down to a dusty despair? Thank God that the wheat is of one greenness, and the broad jowar-blades of another; that the *massoor* and the cotton are tinted of different hues. As one burnt grass-patch is to another, so is Beegaspore to the villages about it. Take the unit—the typical house. Walls of mud simple, or of mud cast into the shape of bricks. A loose scattering of tiles cast as roofing upon a framework of sticks and bamboos. A small *chabootra** of mud before the door, with a mud parapet, half a foot high, running round it. A smearing of cow-dung over all except the roof. Lump together half a hundred of such dwellings without regard to order, or whether front faces back, and let the spaces for passage, between, be as narrow and tortuous as possible. Tie up cows on the *chabootras*, and let loose curs in every alley. Contrive that a mangy tattoo with its fore-legs hobbled together shall come halting through the broadest lane. Confine not the naked children with the marks of 'chenchak'† scabs upon them. Fill the houses with unkempt, half-clad, rough-featured women, and let a sprinkling of lean-legged old men linger, squatted at the doorways. Shed hot sunshine over all, and a sickly savour of dust between the sunbeams, and you have a perfect village of the Beegaspore type.'"

"The description is very eloquent," said I, lolling back in an arm-chair. "It is also very just," said the Collector, "but it is hardly fair to attribute manifestations of spiritual straitness and darkness to the influence of broad sunlight. When a man is too poor to be able to take a pride in self and its belongings, or too ignorant to change the meanness of his surroundings by aid of the wealth that he has, his home and all his wearing will not make a fair show in the eyes of the civilized rich."

* Platform.

† Small-pox.

"its the want of grass," said I, "that disgusts one: a patch of green in a dusty village would act upon the eyes like brandy and water upon the general frame." The Collector rose and began walking to and fro. It is his usual way of beginning a lecture. Feeling cynical that day, I fixed my eyes on the hairy and grinning populace who gathered, as if to listen, upon the boughs above us. "Don't be too familiar," I muttered, "you will find that he hates a good many of you all the same."

"If the town near which we are now encamped," commenced the lecturer, "there is only one building which I can call a house, and it belongs to a wealthy *bania*. The Mal-guzar,* with an income exceeding that of the trader, inhabits a hut which is but a little less wretched than the clustered cabins of the daily labourers about it. He buries much of his money in the ground, not from miserliness, but from ignorance of what he might safely do with it, after building a big temple in the manner of his ancestors. When he goes abroad, he rides on a softly-ambling horse, with a martingale of coloured cloths, and is followed by a crowd of ragged footmen, bearing each a sword and targe. No more is needed to give him dignity in the eyes of the townspeople; he is their hereditary lord, and observes the fashions of his forefathers. The *bania*, on the other hand, being an upstart—a *novus homo*—must look to the present for the materials of his renown. He knows the influence of wealth. He bodies forth his success in forms which his experience of cities and men enables him to reproduce. Looking upon his two-storied and turreted house, on the dark, carven pillars of the verandah, and on the gilded rails of the gallery, he sees not only himself and his fortune reflected, as it were, in brick and wood, but he sees also, around it, an inseparable influence

* Landowner.

which will make him respected by others in proportion as his building is more excellent than theirs. I myself behold that enterprising trafficker's house with an exceeding joy. It seems to have a voice for me saying—‘Only leave us alone, and you will see what we will do for our town. We want friendship, not pupilage.’” “Ah!” I interjected, “and how about the sanitary arrangements, the drainings, and the sweepings? Depend upon it, the enterprising trafficker has a be-muddled pool, or channel, from a well, in his courtyard, beside which he loves to squat, and to rub his piece of woody fibre on his gums.* I never could understand the Hindoo's liking for slops.”

“By-and-bye,” went on the lecturer, not noticing the interruption, “as trade grows, there will be a row of such houses built, and then we shall have a ‘gunj.’ Merchants who have seen the cleanliness of municipal towns will come to me, and beg that I will arrange to get theirs made a municipality also; but I will steadfastly refuse!” He uttered this last sentence in a triumphant tone, and, stopping in his walk and looking round at me, seemed to wait for a note of exclamation. I silently raised my brows. The monkeys all gathered to the end of a bough which hung just over the spot where the Collector stood, and stooping towards him as far as safety permitted, seemed to listen intently for what might come. “For why?” proceeded the Collector. “Their end they will be able to achieve in another way; and this resort to taxation by sanction of law has sometimes an artful motive, and often unfortunate results. Salt merchants will propose a tax on cattle-sales, and so keep their town sweet at small cost to themselves. To administer the funds of a municipality, either a European officer or a native Government official, imbued with European ideas, must have a voice in the Committee, and, then, who knows what

* A piece of *Neem*-wood is a favourite Hindoo tooth-brush.

perfectly square, but unnecessary, market-places, or what town-halls in the Byzantine style may not be forced into being? ‘No, No!’ I will reply” (and here the Collector stamped his foot and shook his forefinger in so vigorously negative a manner that all the monkeys took fright and fled away into the inmost recesses of the grove); “if you wish to set public sweepers at work and to keep them at it, subscribe among yourselves a few rupees monthly, and let him who is the foremost in credit among you be mayor of your unchartered corporation. I will lend him all the might of my personal and official influence. If you cannot walk even thus far alone, you are unworthy of being gazetted members of a council for the government of your town.”

“But surely,” I said, “municipalities do much in the way of beautifying, and in removing that dusty sameness of which the Captain complains. I was visiting lately the principal town of the district next to this, and I found that the mean appearance of the shambling ‘gol bazaar’* had been dignified by two large entrances of plastered brick, with central and side arches, after the manner of the Roman triumphal structures. They gave a classic air to the place.

“Quite delightful,” exclaimed my chief, “and was there no inscription over the arches—‘Divo Smithsono,’ or the like?”

“No,” replied I, “they were perfectly plain; and the plaster was coming off in places.”

“What a pity!” sighed the Collector, “the people would have appreciated the Latin as much no doubt, as they appreciate the arches. And the houses of the town in general—were they of a character to harmonise well with the Smithsonian monuments, or were they of the tumble-down kind?”

“Oh, of the most wretched,” answered I, “and the whole place bore a close resemblance to the description contained in Captain Vigilant’s letter. It seemed a great disorder.”

* Shops arranged in a “Circus.”

"Believe me," cried my philosophic instructor, "I am sometimes inclined to think that the idea of the street proper, that is to say, of a straight road with houses ranged in even line on both sides of it, and of the crossing of such a street by all other streets at right angles, is not properly Asiatic, but is originally Roman. It arose in the camp, and thence passed into English fortified towns with their north, south, east and west gates. The system was preserved by custom, and now we modern English, abroad, are quite unhappy if we find an absence of the same regular principle in Indian cities and villages. But natives of Hindoostan are not naturally given to the rigid uniformity of straight lines and right-angles, in any department of life. If you remember, their armies were always more or less of mobs upon the march; their methods of ornamentation prove the rule; and even the modern husbandman indulges his fancy by making a leash of curves at the top of the long, straight furrows. Upon this capricious, irregular nature of the Hindoos descends the rigid mould of English-formed municipalities, and crushes it up pitilessly. I remember hearing of a Municipal Secretary who issued an impious order that all the houses in a certain row should be made to conform, without delay, to a uniform plan. This King Magician's behest was done; but there being no wageless work-demons at their call, the dwellers in that row got sadly into debt in consequence, and have not got out of it yet."

"The ancient *chabootra*," said I, "must answer for much of that disorder in house-building of which we complain. It is like the awkward garden of a semi-detached villa. Hari Ram fancies a western aspect for the platform where he squats of an evening, while Lachman prefers a southern front. Without a little *zulm*,* how shall we make the crooked straight?"

* Tyranny.

"There is no need to make it straight," replied my mentor, "unless sanitary and administrative arrangements are hindered much by its being crooked. In England, regularity is generally secured, through the fact that houses, or cottages, are built up in blocks and rows by contractors and landlords, and scarce a man builds for himself. This fact brings to my mind a suggestion for municipalities that have thousands to waste on Smithsonian monuments. It is that they should become builders of habitable tenements, ranged orderly and finished neatly, after the fashion of police lines; and lease them out to approved occupants. If this proposition seems too hazardous or preposterous, let me put forward another. A municipality of the sort described might modestly arrange, if there be no local trade in them, to supply (pardon, ye exalted ones, the humble level of thought) good tiles at a cheap rate, and so make water-tight and fire-resisting houses more common. As a final idea, let me recommend that the same municipality, if it dislike the business, give the whole town the luxury of a uniform coat of whitewash at the proper seasons. In this way, we might even attain to smartness in the mofussil."

"I like that idea of the cottages," said I. "Immortality (the ambition, as you describe it, of district officers in their building schemes) might be ensured by the discreet painting on of a name. Thus 'Smithson Row' would suggest the glory of that Vice-President under whose auspices it rose into being."

"I beseech you, however, to remember," said the Collector, assuming a very earnest tone, "that these cottages would not be of brick—not in this district at all events. In the catechism of every Assistant Magistrate it should be written—*'Q.—What is the most foolish thing that an executive officer with public money to spend, can do? A.—Rush into red brick. Why should boys' schools, girls' schools, hospitals, dispensaries,*

all be of red brick? Near the Police Lines, of mud-walled cottages, here, there is a Public Works-madness of red brick, growing up in the form of a Police Hospital. Why should a man who lives in a mud-walled house, when he is well, be supposed to require a brick-walled one when he falls sick? Those shadeless gable ends, however handsomely finished, will not be cooler than a mud-wall with a verandah of bamboos and mats coming low down before it. Think of the difference of cost, too; of the cruel waste of means taken from the very bread of the people. Are we justified in doing these things, in gratifying our taste for English architecture at the expense of millions? All honour to the man who resists the modern mania for monuments and, steadfastly shutting his ears to all suggestions of 'make it *pucka*,' is contented, and represents to his superior the people's satisfaction with, mud-walled schools, mud-walled hospitals, mud-walled cook-houses, and mud-walled dispensaries. If a time come when statues shall be fashionable in the towns of this province, I shall send my earliest subscription towards a statue for *him*."

PIPETTE.

I.

Do you remember Pipette,
That morning, long ago,
When the path to the hill with dew was wet,
And your face to the fragrant bloom was set
Of the Orchard of Angot?
You said that you could ne'er forget
The gardens of Angot;
You wished that we "had never met
Since love was bitter as the sloe—"
Yes, "bitter as the sloe!"

II.

I can remember, Pipette,
Your pale cheek's deepening rose,
As I likened the hues in its oval set
To the flowers in the orchard close ;
And while your foot the grass did fret,
As if the blades were foes,
I kissed your lids with dew-drops wet,
Lest love, long tried, should grow morose,
Lest love should grow morose !

III.

Was it only in sport, Pipette ?
Your heart is cold, I know—
But the iciest breast may be kindled yet
By another's passionate glow ;
Your spirit's life awhile was let
From its airy ebb and flow,
Till some one taught you to forget—
When apple boughs were white with snow
And the hill was draped in snow !

IV.

Do you think on the past, Pipette ?
Now you are graver grown,
And other lips your lips have met,
Sealed up the portals of regret
And claimed you for their own ?
You said, "you never could forget!"
Does my love's after-glow
Cling like the summer glory set
On the clear orchards of Angot ?
Dear orchards of Angot.

A PAPER CHASE.

ALL the servants were on the house-top, gazing over the scraggy palm-trees and the more voluptuous mangoes, to where the hunt was tailing off. With cries and gesticulations they indicated to the late comer that he must make haste. He made haste, and overtook, first, a man who had lost his pith-hat and had dismounted to pick it up, and then—in a cluster of shanties which euphemism might call a village—several mounted gentlemen and a mounted lady, who were scaring the picketed buffaloes and the unpicketted children with hasty searchings for the trail. Presently some one “chortles” in a voice supposed to resemble the cry of a hound that throws off—and away goes the chase over ash-mounds and chabootras, and into the open beyond. A steep hill obtrudes itself—one of those treeless, hard-featured hills which lie about like spoil-mounds in the neighbourhood of Cobra city. It is a hard “breather,” and nobody says a word till he gets to the top. Then, what a top! It is like a potato-garden, with all the tubers dug up and petrified by a severe frost. A pilgrimage to Loretto, with unboiled peas in one’s shoes, would be nothing to a thousand paces, in the best of boots, over this plateau. As the horses put their hoofs down, the jars of iron against stone send sympathetic and agonizing thrills through each rider’s heart. One thinks of iron-feruled umbrellas stamping on sensitive corns; and of a score of other painful analogies. Why, in the name of mischief, did the paper-scented “Hare” choose this line of country? The great “Earl Doorm” abjures him in a few loud and expressive phrases. Poor “Porthos” is glad of the breathing-time which the slackened race among the boulders allows. There is a cool wind blowing over the height; and in the cheeks of “Santanella” there comes a glow—“As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.”

Or is it the reflection of the sunset which now tints the western clouds? Small time for poetic thought. "Sieur Lamoitie" sounds upon his horn; and helter-skelter they follow him. They have got to the edge of the hill, and a steep descent is before them. The Scotch may talk of a "stout heart to the stae brae," but that is looking at it from below: viewed from above, the situation is better described by some such phrase as "a limber leg to the loose bluff." In the course of the precipitate and precipitous progress to the level, the remembrance that animal life is based on an osseous frame-work is confusedly mingled with memories of the atom-streams of the Lucretian system that—

"Ruining along the illimitable inane
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever."

At last the bottom is reached. The trail now lies along a rocky gully, where dwarf *palas* shrubs struggle miserably for life. The ingenious Hare came this way because a nullah lies ahead, which will give to the chase all the éclat of a water-jump. Every huntsman is supposed to be burning to achieve distinction by jumping. It must be admitted that the performance fell mostly short of expectation. "Sicur Lamoitie" and "Santanella," indeed, got over with credit, but when heavy "Porthos" came to the brink, his steed stopped to look before it leaped, and the treacherous bank gave way. The great "Earl Doorm" cried—"Don't excite yourself—take it quietly,—as I do!" and deliberately walked his horse across. Thereafter the scent was lost; and the sad company might have wandered around till nightfall but for the guidance of a canny hound, who had got a wrinkle from the hare as to the way he was going to run. He strikes across country and catches up the scent a half-mile nearer home. This man-

œuvre is almost fatal to the "Hare," who was taking it quietly with a young companion. He has to fly for his life. With loud view-halloos the hunters gallop in pursuit. The ground is varied with patches of black cotton soil, which the rain has rendered soft and plastic. The hoofs of "Porthos's" horse make terrible pitfalls in this, and Earl Doorm darkens the air with flying clods. One of these, falling on a small man, went near to dismounting him. Suddenly, there appears in the way a stone wall, about the length and height of a turnpike-gate, which, from the green leaves which decorate its summit and its want of connection with any adjoining object, seems clearly to have been put there "on purpose." The horses object to such a practical joke, and "jink" past it. The pony ridden by the Hare's companion had been deceived by the green leaves, and had come to grief here sadly. It is found waiting around, with broken knees. Meanwhile the "Hare" himself is going like Dick Turpin, and throughout the floundering mud of the fields there is no overtaking him. The hunters splash along in gloomy silence. "Porthos's" steed is "all of a lather" with foam; and the beard of the great "Earl Doorm" is dirt-bespeckled. It is hoped that the "Hare" will lie by in a hollow till the chase can overhaul him; but he has no such intentions. He goes straight through the Police Lines to the D. S. P.'s house, and there dismounts. It is very exasperating to see him standing coolly on the gravel; and the D. S. P.'s hedges suffer from the wild inroad of the tired pursuers. "Santanella" flies the quick-set beautifully; while "Porthos" makes no small breach in the *mendi*.* The D. S. P. is good-natured; and not only forgives them all, but spreads a fair table with refreshments. By-and-by, the "Hare's" companion comes in on a *sowar's†* horse; and the ladies make life less bitter for him.

* A plant used for hedging, the leaves of which yield a red dye.

† Mounted policeman.

TRESSES.

SHAKE back thy golden tresses,
For surely it were sin
Their silky wildernesses
Should circle and veil in
What now my vision blesses,
Dear emblems of caresses—
Curved lips and dainty chin !

II.

Shake back thy shining tresses,
Lest, wind bestirred, they float
And lap in filmy dresses
Or gird, as with a moat,
That keep which love confesses,
With sweet awe him possesses—
The white tower of thy throat !

III.

Yes, part thy jealous tresses,
And let the anxious day
Cast off its wan distresses,
And catch the welcome gay
Which every glance expresses
From shyly-lashed recesses,
Where happy love-lights play !

GOSSIP.

ONE will always hear plenty of cheap outcry against Gossip, but Gossip goes on famously all the same. Must not some secret affinity with nature underlie this astounding vitality of a depreciated habit? It may be worth while to look into the matter for a moment. I would draw a distinction between malicious Gossip, which we sometimes call Scandal, and Gossip of the innocent kind. And yet one glides into the other so easily. I am inclined to think that in this subject, as in others of a higher kind, the moral quality of the matter is much affected by the nature of the mind which approaches it. A robust mind not only dips into pitch without being defiled, but converts the element of immersion into something brilliantly gaseous. The pinched intellect alone makes havoc of the moral scene with its tarry splashings. It is easy to be grave and dull; but gravity and dulness do not suit the needs of humanity at every hour. Every man and woman of us likes to play the fool now and again. Those gay revolutions and evolutions to the sound of music, which we call dancing, are but a muscular response to the craving for an expression which the delight of rhythmic sounds evokes in us. And gossip is but the effervescence in words of the enthusiasm of confidence which attacks those who make a privacy in the midst of a crowd. The communication of a thought which is almost certain to find a sympathetic response in the bosom of his or her friend, is a great joy to every human being. Explanation, except on the ground of the expansion and fortifying of the spiritual ego, is difficult; but the fact remains. And this ego, which finds such a satisfaction in that temporary extension of its domain which results from the assent of others to its thought, gains a new expansion when the constant rivalry of third parties is momentarily abased by a flash of ridicule.

Nothing fascinates like the suggestion of the ridiculous; so that he who has a ludicrous tale to tell of another's *faux pas* or another's foibles, warms the cockles of his friend's heart, as well as his own. Who can resist the temptation of an enjoyment so generous? Society subdues and limits the expression of self by its conventional forms. It is the elastic recoil from this compression which makes us pour out our buoyant spirits in the private conferences of a friendly *clique*. To make sure of touching a chord that will answer, we go at once for the ridiculous, and rush into Gossip. A tag of Gossip being thus the *consigne* which passes us within the lines of sympathy, we need not condemn the thing off-hand. It is only a harmful implement when we make that appear truth which is but raillery.

The mood of Gossip should be one of jest; and every statement made therein should be tailed off with a cracker of mirth, to explode its serious meaning. Otherwise, we are not gossips, but tale-bearers.

Thus, although the very basis of that satisfaction which we find in Gossip lies in the exaltation and expansion of self, yet, if there is an under-thought which seeks the depreciation of another on account of a grudge, and we aim at killing two birds with the same sling-stone of jest, Gossip not only ceases to be innocent, but becomes base.

The *arrière pensée* reveals itself shortly, and sympathy changes to contempt.

Inasmuch, however, as most mortals are frail, and the indulgence of personal dislikes is only too common, contempt is generally veiled, and the spirit of amusement carries the day. None the less has Gossip got a bad name on account of these airy virulences which it constantly evokes. Persons who cannot trust their good nature should never gossip. Having exercised this much restraint, they should not assume a proud attitude, and refuse to listen or smile when others

chatter. • Nothing could be more absurd or disagreeable.. King Log among the frogs, was nothing to it. They should recognize the utility of Gossip, as able to throw down the suspended crystals of cold individualism in a precipitate of sympathetic glee. They may correct any tendency to acidity by the timely infusion of a little more essence of "chaff." Some people try to oust Gossip altogether from their intercourse, or to confine it to such subjects as the weather or the fashions. Some horrify the ladies with the painful substitution of "shop," and a few attempt politics with the aid of press-made opinions. But these subjects do not "draw," like a tale beginning—"Have you heard what So-and-So did?" The reason being that personal details are concrete, easily apprehended by the many, and instinct with vital force. So that ere long the prosers are left speaking; and we all crowd round the man with an anecdote. The nearer the scene of the anecdote, the spicier it is; but so long as no under-current of ill-feeling is there, who would grudge him his audience? I, for one, will go and listen with the rest.

LAUGHTER.

"FRIEND, when we laugh, let all our laughter be
As the first beams which chase the dark away,
Or as the ripple of the ebb of day
In the green harbour of the mango tree.

II.

Not as the grim laugh of the shameless noon,
Which seres and smiles, and scorches where it rests;
For bitterness is born of graceless jests
And echoes sadly to the mute, pale moon.

III.

If we would keep our souls in just accord
With the proud spirit of the deep-pulsed world,
We must not be as leaves by mad winds whirled,
Nor cast our dignity in others' ward."

IV.

"But wherefore rhymes my friend this rede to me?
Has merry Lettice laughed his suit to scorn?
Were her eyes ruthless?"—"As the sparkling morn!
And her soul's mirth went o'er me like the sea!"

PHILOSOPHY AT A BAND-STAND.

THEY say that the solar spots have strange influence upon terrestrial affairs; and it may be that the circling of the earth round the sun has a mystical effect upon society. Else, why that tendency in social gatherings to revolve round a centre? Families are popularly said to form "circles." May-dances had a floral pole within their rotary mazes; and the worship of the golden calf in latter, as in ancient days, has a centripetal movement. Our Indian habit of marching round a band-stand on many evenings of the week may be due to the occult action of the course referred to. It is extravagantly asserted that music draws us, as a candle the moths; but the poverty of this explanation is exposed when we note how few of the promenaders give their ears to any sounds but those of the larynx. When a tune is done, people talk more freely, as though rid of a distraction.

The way in which music has become wedded to the drama, has a subtle effect on the gait and bearing of all who walk within sound of anything like an orchestra. Unconsciously,

the promenade becomes slightly "stagey." The men assume the tragic buskin, the ladies are fluttery, the children join hands and skip. One has an uneasy feeling that if the tune grew brisker, the policemen and the *ayahs* would perform a pantomime.

As in the solar system, the motions of the bodies within reach of attraction are not equal, but diverse. One man bolts round the course like a runaway horse ; others stalk like the ghosts of the Scottish kings. The people on the benches are like astronomers sweeping the heavens with their telescopes, with here and there an unscientific romanticist pricking his ears for the music of the spheres. Now they mark the ruddy aspect of Mars, now they study the transit of Venus. Occasionally, a new planet is discovered, and his orbital motion is nicely calculated. A nebulous crowd of vulgar spectators is constant in the background. Why should we wish to "see ourselves as others see us?" It is much greater fun to see others as they don't see themselves. It is an admirable provision of Nature that we can't all be intimate friends. Intimacy destroys that spicily objective side of the relations between man and his neighbour, which enables the one to scan and criticise the other as a not wholly-understood entity, with unknown powers of making himself ridiculous. We are very glad if our non-intimate acquaintance makes himself ridiculous for our amusement ; and if he does not do so, but is warily conventional, he wins from us a certain faint respect. As it is well to know whom to respect, there is plenty of reason for telescopic observation of the planetary world of fashion.

Why ghosts are always dressed in white, I cannot imagine ; unless the winding sheet is the *toga* or the *chiton* of the unseen universe. Instances of a blue or a black ghost are rare. Neither can I understand why a sombre suit of black should be the only colour in which even the most *spirituel* of male beings can genteelly manifest himself to ladies. The

fortunate wearer of a glossy black hat, a funeral frock-coat and dusky trousers, possesses an inestimable advantage with them over a friend in flannels. There can be no question that the latter's attire is the more picturesque, the more manly, the more adapted for those easy and unrestrained movements which win the name of grace—but the ladies condemn it. The explanation probably is, that they do not like a man to be too much at home in their company ; they like him to make a ring-fence of his collar, a stockade of his waistcoat, and a penal discipline of his hat. When he approaches them in these hobble of the outfitter, they find him more amenable to order ; even as a horse is when broken by Rarey's method.

An unbridled spirit would, one thinks, be undismayed by the bonds of cloth and linen in which gentility swathes him, and leap out into jocular freedom. But it was long ago pointed out in "*Sartor Resartus*" that a man's apparel has a subjective as well as an objective effect. It is certain that the "*Grim and Thummim*" made the Israelitish priest on whose bosom they reposed twice as conscious of his high calling as a vindicator of Truth and Light ; and snobbery has often been fortified by the exhibition of an Albert chain. A man's head-gear has a particular effect upon his thoughts and motions. The "chimney-pot" hat is allied to the pontifical mitre, and to the crown worn by the king who built the pyramids—to say nothing of the priests of Mithra. In a hat gorgeous with such solemn associations, who could laugh or run ? At most, a guarded smile and a measured crawl is possible. A sense of esoteric solemnity attaches to the villainous "tile," and will not permit of our being flippant in company where we wear it. The blackness of the thing suggests that we are in mourning for our own lost spirits.

ROSES.

'Tis roses, roses, everywhere !
There's not a vase within the room
But smiles with roses, fresh and fair !
A dream of roses fills the air
With white and red and golden bloom,
And faint, ineffable perfume !

II. . .

Blest be the hand that culled these flowers :
And this, the porcelain bowl which brought
The fair brood of sunny hours,
Shall bear unto thy garden-bowers
The bee-like murmur of my thought
Which strives to thank thee as it ought !

III.

I echo not what erst was said,
That all things on this Indian plain,
Saving the flowers, an odour spread—
For now thy white rose, now thy red,
Makes such glad ferment in my brain
That joy is sharpened into pain !

IV.

To every soul that tarries here
This work is fair, I trow, to make
One tended spot of earth more dear
With scented bloom for half the year,
And from the flowers such joy to take
As birds from dawning, when they wake.

OUR CROSSES.

We are great grumblers ; but, after all, we would not willingly part with the crosses that make us grumble. They are badges of distinction, and themes of boasting, as well as burdeny for our backs. Among other things, they justify the pay we draw, though that seems little enough. It is pleasant to dwell on them, although the dissertation be stale.

First of all, the climate. Of course, it is abominable. No one would live in it longer than he could help. But it justifies a good many extravagancies and a good deal of idleness. One may sit with hands folded a whole May morning, and yet feel that one has done something in living it through. One may drink champagne every day, and be comforted with the thought that the climate demands it. One can use bad language to one's servants, and lay the blame on the liver.

Yes, the servants ; this is cross No. 2. Of course, they are scoundrels, thieves, liars, and all the rest of it. They have, however, this virtue : they do not retort on us our abuse. They gratify, moreover, our petty passion for tyranny. Everyone has observed how this passion is developed in children ; how the child crows with delight when a living thing quails before its up-lifted arm. So with boys who stone frogs and torture cats. Upon the grown man in India there returns the vague delight of his infancy and boyhood, when some dark-skinned servitor cringes beneath his hand. In England a blow would find an answering buffet : here one is safe from a *quid pro quo* of that kind ; and the master of the house can talk exultingly before his servants of the excellent drubbings he has given them from time to time. Surely there is compensation in *this* ?

Then, the food ; how bad the food is. It cannot be denied that the native article is very bad. One shudders to think

of the scraggy fowls and the tough mutton. But the greater the difficulties, the greater the triumphs of success. Our "gramfeds" are a source of pride and pleasure. We fatten our own ducks and turkeys upon special principles; and are familiar with the voice of the guinea-fowl. A well-provided table wins more praise here than at home; and a culinary failure is a greater failure. Hence the development of the artistic dinner-faculty in our wives.

Next, the society. How dull we are! What "dowdies" in dress! How slovenly the men show themselves! How "shoppy" the talk is! How monotonous is the daily round! To these moanings one can only reply, that Europe gains by contrast, and we shall enjoy our leave the more. Another fact to be remembered is, that Anglo-Indians are reputed *bons compaynons*. There is an absence of *gêne* about them, which astonishes the stiff-collared stay-at-homes. This is due to our Indian circumstances. We learn to dispense with much ceremony, and to do our best to be friends with our neighbours. A quarrel is inconvenient in a cock-pit. Even a rat and a cat will forget their natural enmity if you make them wretched in a tub. Common adversity reconciles many foes.

The ladies grow to be heroines in their endurance of trials, and can afford to smile at the narrow experience of less travelled English women. Where is the credit of getting through life in a cheerful vein, if all the world and his wife are ready at the door to assist you? It is something to be proud of if you can make a prison cheerful: and much of one's life in India is passed, as it were, in prison bounds.

Of course, the talk is "shoppy;" but it is the men that make it so. It is always in the power of the ladies to put a gag on it. If there supervenes an awful pause, what of that? It gives us time for reflection, and teaches us how very foolish most conversations are, seeing that the absence of cabs and barrel organs throws a palsy on them. There is no place for

thinking like India. You can think from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. without anyone fancying that you are afflicted with *syncope*. You can call it drowsiness, and ask for refreshments when you feel inclined. Yet it is astonishing how small has been the outcome of all the hours of reflection which numberless Anglo-Indians have enjoyed. At most, a few foolish taxes and some botched garments of law. Probably the reason is that at the crisis of creative incubation the mind gives way to sleep.

However stereotyped the conversation, there can be no doubt that our ideas here are anything but conventional. The Breadth of sunlight and the sensation of Empire influence our mental habits. We observe all the vices that strike across life's pathway more calmly than they would in Woburn Square ; and we do not make an outcast of the man who plays whist on Sunday. Our respect for the church and for the professors of medicine is entirely without superstition ; and we sometimes set up a pulpit and a pharmacy of our own. Tie-hats are not deemed necessary to salvation ; and a lady's dress may be as old as her grandmother is, without her losing caste. We get philosophical about diseases ; and take our fevers quietly when they come.

Certainly, the fevers may be numbered as cross No. 5. They form the worst cross of all, and sometimes cross us out altogether. There is some good, perhaps, to be got from the reflection that we have generally ourselves to blame for catching them ; and that they will effectually drive out of us any foolish irascibility which the recollection of this fact may engender.

The last cross to be spoken of is the slowness of promotion ; but such a hubbub of ideas and phrases rushes through the mind at the bare naming of this horrid *gravamen*, that the pen is laid down, and drowsiness is quietly allowed to have its way.

ICED PEG.

I.

Ah, once again I hear.
That sound to mem'ry dear
That voice which crieth clear
 In accents fine,
When round the goblet's rim ..
The icy crystals swim
And strike the glassy brim
 With ring divine !

II.

As sometimes village bells
Heard far o'er moorland fells
Ring out a chime which tells
 Of joys gone by ;
When schoolboy's Lenten grief,
At Easter found relief,
Or, crowned with holly leaf,
 St. Yule drew nigh—

III.

So now, with toil fordone,
Beneath a tropic sun,
I seek my leisure won
 With boyish glee ;
And hear the tongues of ice
Like bells of Paradise
Repeat that Lethe lies
 Iced Peg, in thee !

A BAZAAR.

NOT a native bazaar: and yet a bazaar for the benefit of natives. More exactly speaking, I should say for the benefit of *female* natives: or, still more exactly, for *native females*. A few native females are standing about, education shining in their faces, and Christian plainness in the plaiting of their hair. By simply looking at them, one becomes aware that they have been spiritually nourished on psalms and hymns, and could at any moment raise in chorus the glorious strains of "Gather at the River."

This is a gratifying result of missionary labours. Truly the man or woman whose task it is to take plastic human material and mould it into the conventional shapes of civilization triumphs over the engineer and the horticulturist. Here is no brute, yet cunningly contrived, interaction of inert masses, no ingenuous, yet stereotyped, development of vegetable nature; but a living soul that thinks in prescribed channels, repeats a catechism, and sings touching melodies about time and eternity at the word of command. It is a wonderful result.

To us, standing here in rapt amazement before these palpable (nay, embraceable) products of the action of Western energy and conviction upon Oriental limpness and indifference, it is not difficult to yield that encouragement to the mission's work which comes from the purse. But think of the people far away in England and Scotland—the charitable and pious subscribers whose faith is fed only by reports and photographs—and in pure shame at our own inferior belief, we will rush inside the school-house and buy with zeal whatever the bazaar offers.

The eye beholds a glorious vista of babies' frocks, tea-cosies, and antimacassars. One would think that all the babies in

the station could not get through the frocks at the rate of one each per diem in less than a month. Frocks with blue trimming, red trimming, and black trimming—worked frocks, laced frocks, etched frocks—frocks hanging in the air, frocks on tables, frocks under the tables. You cannot walk a step without brushing against a frock, or getting brushed by a frock. It is like a mute appeal on the part of countless born and unborn babies to your parental kindness, or to your philo-progenitiveness. The tear which rises to your eyes is swelled by the thought of the far-away spinsters and tailors who cut, shaped, hemmed, trimmed, embroidered these little dresses—cut, shaped, hemmed, trimmed, embroidered them without hope of earthly reward, and in pure faith that they would somehow turn to the profit of native females.

Somewhat!—No, they had a clear notion of the how. They knew that you and I would buy them; would pay unproportionate prices for things we do not want. It is but just that we should do so; for we gaze upon the living work of the mission, which for them exists only in reports and photographs. Do we not see the native females with the capacity for hymns in them standing gracefully about? It is worth a rupee or two extra—the sight of this wonderful result. But oh! far-away tailors and spinsters, you seem to have forgotten that the savage men who dwell in these wilds do not find it necessary to go out of doors to smoke. Here are no curtains to be spoiled by tobacco; and they smoke in happy ease in their dining-rooms. I fear that these prettily-embroidered smoking-caps which lie among the tea-cosies, hiding their modest heads like pansies in a gay *parterre*, will not be much sought after by smokers. Even as night-caps, they would fail to find a use in this warm country.

But, after all, what matters it whether they are sought after or not? One is not here to buy what one wants, but to give a subscription under the veil of a purchase. One must

not look at the affair in a commercial light. Granted that I may carry away a pretty article for my money, can the transaction ever be seriously viewed as satisfactory? Will not the disproportion between the value and price rise disagreeably to my mind whenever I am disposed to admire it? Will I not marvel at my own folly?

Perhaps this is a harsh way of looking at the thing. A person who reasons thus has either forgotten that the margin between value and price is the measure of his donation to the mission, or he remembers this, and thinks his money wasted all the same. If the latter be his unenviable mood, I would suggest a few consolatory reflections.

I am touched on the shoulder by a fair hand and invited to purchase. Now, unless the soliciting party be his own wife, or a female relative, there is hardly a man who can resist such an invitation. In the character of the temptress, woman has from all ages had an extraordinary success. A bewitching *diablerie* seems to possess her whenever the possibility of inducing a man to do a silly action is presented to her mind. She espies a double victory—the dethronement of his vaunted superiority to folly, and an act of obedience to her wish. A pretty girl in a bazaar is mistress of misrule, and the gravest heads go ajousting with purses. The gallant captor of a long-priced bit of broidery is rewarded like a victor in the tourney—with a smile.

Are smiles nothing? When one considers the multiplicity of mental and physical conditions which interlace themselves in a smile, it may be deemed a precious thing. Is the pleasure of approbation nothing—especially when the approbation comes from a source not so intimately related to us that we should disdain it as savouring of self-praise? Assuredly that margin between value and price which I have mentioned, covers some personal satisfaction which was cheaply bought. Besides, the victims are many;

and the sympathy born of common misfortunes yields innumerable *scintillas* of pleasure. The only real misfortune, after all, is having to carry away one's purchases. One cuts a sorry figure with a tea-cosy in one hand and two or three antimacassars in the other. It is like a penance in a game of forfeits, without the game. If it be only the margin between value and price that is bought, why not sell cakes and flowers? There could be no difficulty or absurdity in disposing of them. Why, for instance, should Corisande not sell me that rose she carries in her bosom?

I would give quite a fancy price for it

THE LILY.

I.

ROSES are fair and rare in their degree,
But daintier than the fairest of them all,
And holiest of all flowers, is verily
The Lily, whom the angels "Alma" call
And stoop to kiss it when its smile they find.

II.

The Lily's bloom, with kindly care increast,
Pale as the gleam of an autumnal morn
Which soothes the fevered exile of the East
With thoughts of the cool land where he was born—
The holy dawn of childhood brings to mind.

III.

What is it that the Lily bids us be?
From every flower that blows a rede we take,
If we can read it—"Be ye like to me,
Unselfish, modest, glad for others' sake
And making simple music to the wind!"

IV.

Music so soft that only loving ears
 Can hear it, when the head is bended low—
 E'en thus, the far faint music of the spheres :
 Yea, all our finest thoughts are whispered so—
 And rarely wisdom in loud words we find.

GOLF.

THIS is how it is played at Cobra City,* $21^{\circ} 9'$ north latitude. It differs slightly from the game known at St. Andrews. The start is made from a fissured strip of black cotton soil, where great care is necessary in placing the ball lest it disappear in a cranny. Before striking off, the player cries to the fore-caddy (a coolie with a flag), and to all the club-bearing chuprassies in rear—"Look out men!"—for if they do not keep their eyes on the flying sphere, it may never be seen again. There is a brown stubble of dead grass all over the field, and the wily golit† is given to hiding among it. Even if you paint it red, it manages to rub that gleaming coat off soon, and takes a sombre colouring like the dead grass. There is a ditch ahead, which the player must clear. Ten chances to one, he does not clear it. "Porthos" has a theory about these ditches to explain why it is that the ball so often drops into one. The onward side of the ditch being in shadow, and cooler than the level, there is a movement of air along the brink, he says, which arrests the exhausted pila. Observe "Tenorino" striking. It is a most wonderful feat. You have a vision of strained limbs

* Nagpore : which city takes its name from the Nag (Cobra), a stream very serpentine in its windings and not, as is by some supposed, from the presence of many snakes.

† Ball.

"frenetic to be free." Like a loosed Lacoone, he launches at last his stroke with a *whiz* that makes the air cry out. All eyes search the horizon. *Where's the bull?* Suddenly, some one discovers it at "Tenorino's" feet. "Missed, by Jove!" he says; and his adversaries, "Porthos" and "Bras-de-fer," smile grim smiles of joy. "Play two more!" roars "Bras-de-fer." I do not think it is of much use trying to explain what he means by this; only a person who has playcd golf can understand the scoring. It is worse than tennis. "Tenorino" refuses to play "two more," and says "Porthos" must play "the like." In the dispute that follows, "Odd" and "Like" and "Two more" and "Like as you lie," are the phrases flung about. The fore-caddy sits down and waits. By a desperate act of resolve "Bras-de-fer" at last cries "Fore!" in a terrific tone, and whirls his iron tool. Into the root-meaning of this expression I will not enter. It is probably an abbreviation for "fore-caddy;" and is a direction to that much-endangered individual to get out of the way. This he does by crouching, as a partridge crouches when it sees a hawk over-head. High in air soars the sorely-smitten ball, tracing a beautiful parabola, with an ending like that of the rocket-stick. It drops perpendicularly into the inevitable ditch, and stops there with a determined "thud."

The expression on "Bras-de-fer's" face would make a capital picture—"study of a Disgusted Golfer." His position is rigid; like a Pompeian mummy, he is fixed in the attitude of his latest act. When life and motion return, he ejaculates an esoteric word, whose import I dare not reveal. Seeing the mishap, the partner of the discomfited "Tenorino" ("Papa Beaupère" by name) chuckles joyously. He begins to sway to and fro, swinging his club as an elephant, waiting for its fodder, swings its trunk. Again and again the club descends, but the ball is not smitten. It is like waiting for the crack of doom. At last the much-meditated stroke is

delivered. Fragments of turf spin aloft, the ball gives a feeble bound forward, and the head of the club flies off with the *whirr* of a cock-grouse rising. Maledictions and ironic laughter mingle in the air; but "Tenorino" takes heart of grace. With the *slogan* "Two more!" he sends the ball, like a shot from a catapult, far beyond the ditch. In this ditch behold now the painful "Porthos" removing the small crags and boulders that encircle his fated *goli*. When he has cleared a pretty ring, he savagely smites. Unfortunately his aim descends not on its object, but on an adjoining rock, and the iron tool is shattered in pieces. "Play the like!" halloos "Tenorino" from the distance. But "Bras-de-fer" does not play the like. He is a cautious man, and plays differently. He calls for a special kind of instrument, bearing a name which recalls of the Norse Epics—a "Nibling." It resembles a huge cheese-taster. In order to apply it properly, he gets two chuprassies to support him on the precipitous slope of the ditch. In this position he reminds the spectator of General Wolfe on the heights of Abram, about to "die happy." In sooth, when by a deft and vigorous jerk he sends the ball aloft, his precipitate recoil into the ditch makes it appear that he is really done for. The over-borne chuprassies hastily rise and set him on his legs again. "Porthos" meanwhile has scrambled up the *glacis*, and is looking everywhere for the ball.

The rehabilitated General joins him and asks anxiously "Where is it?" Nobody knows. After half an hour's search the discomfited ones give up the game. A week afterwards the lost ball is recovered,—discoloured, and bloated almost beyond recognition. It had fallen into a well!

HOG-STICKING.

I.

WITH horses girthed ready and spear-shafts to hand,
In the dusk of a shadowy Peepul w^o stand ;
The flags of our scouts on the watch-trees are high,
And in the palm thicket the hoarse beaters cry—

“ So-ho ! So-ho !” the horn’s notes say,..

“ A hog has broke covert and gone away !”

II.

Each man to the saddle, each hand to the spear !
Ride, ride, for the open with speed of the deer !
For through the green champaign with wheat rippled ~~over~~,
There scud the black bristles and sides of a boar !

“ So-ho ! So-ho !” the horn’s notes say,

“ The hog is before you, now spear him who may !”

III.

Across the stiff nullah and down the steep brae
The hunters are streaming in gallant array !
Our spurring file-leaders their spear-heads advance
And in the boar’s haunches is plunged a sharp lance !

“ So-ho ! So-ho !” the horn’s notes say,

“ The tusker is wounded and gnashes at bay !”

IV.

Then close we our forces, and narrow the ground,
Avoid his fierce charges and circle him round,
Ride in and strike home—give our spear-shafts a stain
Till a thrust in his heart ends the old porker’s pain.

“ So-ho ! So-ho !” the horn’s notes say,

“ The brave hog is dead—let us bear him away !”

PROBLEMS OF INDIAN LIFE.

THE field of employment for *entrepreneurs* is yearly widening. A Wolseley takes a contract for the subjugation of Zulu-land, and we are threatened with a tender from Hyndman for the financial reintegration of India. Why do not Anglo-Indian stations call in contractors for social fun? There is no doubt that amusement is an art. How few of us excel in it! The shadow of officialism lies like a fog-cloud over mofussil spirits. Occasionally, a gay soldier puffs away the mist with the light-hearted *persiflage* born of idle hours; or a high-spirited lady draws us like moths round the radiance of her raillery. But, mostly, we lounge in disorganized gloom.

Society is a mob, if it has not leaders. At home, its leaders are leaders of fashion, backed by an army of tailors, dressmakers, confectioners, and coach-builders. In this benighted land the camp-followers of fashion are so degraded that its march is anything but gorgeous, and we are indifferent to its state. We gather growlingly round officialism in verandah-coats. There is, indeed, a leadership of calling and dining, but it is exceedingly *triste*. Hence it is that the arrival of a Dave Carson seems a godsend; and a travelling photographer, skilful in taking groups, is a six days' excitement. Ours is a despotism of dullness tempered by fortnightly dances.

I have sometimes thought that as so much of human gaiety is dependent upon the pleasures of the table, a reversion to the Spartan *Syssitia* might do something to ward dissipating our *ennui*. The whole station might dine together in the Assembly Room, the head of each household bringing his own mess (*psidirns*) and those absent at the chase sending a present. The station band would play, and the joke-making man of the company could economise his talents, and please all at once with the same *bon-mot*. The formal drcariness of private

saddle-of-mutton parties would be avoided, and the impudence of "after dinner calls" entirely got rid of. At the same time, that pride which builds itself upon a superior *cuisine* might yet have foothold in the rivalry of messes. What room for graceful compliment in the exchange of pottages !

This of the *Syssitia*, however, is a mere mechanical device, which would, probably, fail if not under the control of some genial authority. There should, in fact, be a master of the revels to attend to the pleasures of the station. A man with a genius for the rôle is generally to be found upon search ; or, in default of local ability, a salaried *impresario* might be arranged for. When a "big-wig" comes to visit us, how busy we can all be in devising entertainments ! We appoint committees, and charge this or that individual with the control of particular branches of festal expense. Is not the entertainment of that respectable corporation which we call the "Station" of as great importance as the feasting of a Duke or a Viceroy ?

When we consider it, how cold and barren are our present devices for mutual entertainment ! We ask each other out to dinner, and then live for a fortnight on the credit of our full-dress feed. A dinner party in England has at least a certain distinction in the variety of the *entremets* and the *relevés* which the French cook or the confectioner supplies : but here in India one's daily fare at home is a shabby imitation of the *menu* of a *petit diner*, and the service of an entertainer's table has not even the charm of variety. One grows weary of *compôt de pigeons*, oyster-patties, *glacé-chops* with a potato-cock in the centre, and roast ducks *vis-à-vis* with club-mutton. One has seen that sort of thing so often on our private tables ; and yet there are many of us who think that their whole duty to man begins and ends in presenting their compliments, and will he come and eat the same, once a month. In return, he must put on his Sunday costume and *call*, or be glared at for *heathon*.

• *Quo faire?* One cannot revive the fanciful and costly amusements of *Petit Trianon* in a poverty-stricken up-country station. Besides, we must not justify a revolution by surrendering ourselves to the pursuit of pleasure, in disregard of our mission in this land. So some grave wiseacres would argue. But the disease of melancholy is setting down so fast upon humanity that it becomes a social duty to do something to combat it. Of hard work there is already more than enough: nay, the struggle of existence is in itself a warrant for recreating gaiety. At the end of each hot season we scan each others' pale faces, and exchange congratulations, like the survivors of a battle-field or of a siege. It is not a time, then, for spiritual mortification: there is always a sect of society of the "prunes and prism" sort, who will do *puja* enough for all, and leave the rest to their frolics. Call in the *entrepreneur*, and let him arrange our parts in the business of diversion: or if he is not to be found, appoint a committee of fun. Let the wags have their comedy, the artists their exhibition, the musicians their concert, the aesthetes their *conversazione*, the athletics their arena, the whist-players their club. Above all, let us not forget the *Syssitia*.

DEAD.

I.

THOUGH we pass from mouth to mouth the word that is sadly said,

Though we noise it north and south or whisper it near with dread,

How shall a man conceive that his friend is dead?

II.

“ Dead” is easily spoken ; but shall he so understand
 That the soul its bonds has broken, as a bird flies from the hand ?
 Or that the spirit has lost its fatherland ?

III.

Shall he be glad or sorry ? If sorry, for what shall he grieve ?
 For the flight which killed the quarry, or wounds that death
 will leave ?

For the stain of self in weeds which grief doth weave ?

IV.

All he can learn is this, though he beat on his breast for hours,
 That a mystic loss is his, that a fruitless wail is ours,
 That earth has still her smile, whatever sorrow lours !

NAGPORE ELECTRIFIED.

In England we have enough of chimney-stacks. We do not like the look of them, remembering the smoke, grime, and general blighting of natural beauty that hangs about them like a curse. In India, where they are rare objects as yet, the associations are different. The country is generally so very much blighted already with dust and glare as to be incapable of taking harm from a chimney. The tall shaft, with its crown of smoke, has power upon our patriotic fancy. As the sight of a church spire rouses many pious memories of rural England, so the familiar elevation of a factory chimney awakens our manufacturing instincts. The true Briton of to-day is what coal has made him : even as his ancestors of Harry the Eighth's time were of the mettle that wood produces, with its forest sports, its tough long-bows, and its ships of oak. If we can only make India into a manufacturing country, we

shall have achieved our destinies. Meantime we do as much as the time allows by digging a coal-mine here, and crying hurrah to a factory there, and hope by the blessing of Heaven to see the glare of the sun somewhat tempered with smoke-fumes before we die.

To Nagpore folk the whitewashed shaft of their one factory—the “Empress Spinning and Weaving Mills”—is as much a “dear familiar sign” as the pillar of cloud was to the marching Israelites, or as the column in Fish Street is to the citizens of that part of London. The trail of smoke from its top shows which way the wind is blowing. The sportsman, far afield, guides his way home by “taking a bee-line” to the chimney. The home-sick dreamer, who eyes it from beyond the ridge and signal-mast of Seetabuldi,* fancies it to be the funnel of an outward bound steamer lying at the bunder. Thus, each and all find some use or solace in this *excelsior*-finger of industry; and when, not long ago, there was a talk of a rival mill being started, there was a general, though tacit, feeling that the aerial sovereignty of the Empress’s chimney ought not to be divided.

Occasionally, the people of Nagpore pay a visit to the factory under the impulse given by visitors from Kamptee,† in the same way as the advent of country cousins sometimes pushes Cockneys to the Tower. They are always politely received by the Parsee Manager, and go in among the machinery with a confident air, which implies that of course they have seen this sort of thing in England, and only renew their acquaintance for the sake of *auld lang syne* and Parsee progress. This complacency is apt to be confounded by the per-

* Seetabuldi hill stands close over the Residency (as the building occupied by the Chief Commissioner is still called) in Nagpore. It is fortified; and was the scene of a memorable conflict in 1817 between the English troops and the forces of Apa Sahib.

† Kamptee is a Military Cantonment, nine miles distant from Nagpore. *

vading odour of oil and steaming size, to which is added a certain difficulty of breathing, due to the floating, filmy particles of cotton. The continual noise and motion of the machinery, however, distracts the attention from these sensuous details, and permits the mind to lose itself in dreamy attempts to understand what the reels and spindles are driving at. Every bobbin seems to be chattering a different tale, and trying to make itself heard above the blatant din of the shafting and driving-drums overhead. Little boys run to and fro, and dab their fingers in among the machinery in a distressful way ; and the shouts of the supervisor sound like the shrieks of some mutilated sufferer on the rack. By-and-by, certain stages in the busy whole are dimly differentiated to the eye : the carding room with its big iron mangles ; the drawing and twisting rooms with their snowy films (*fine as the mist which “creeps from pine to pine”*), and their revolving milk-cans filling with creamy cotton-coils ; the spinning room with its army of whirling reels and the solemn come and go of its ironware ; the weaving room with its countless filigree arms, which bandy to and fro the flying shuttle ; the sizing room from which the sickening, gluey odour of the steaming size repels the stranger. These and other steps in the process of converting cotton into yarn and cloth, make a more or less distinct individual impression on his mind. In the main the visitor feels, however, that he is in a weird, uncanny place, where the only thing that is silent is the human tongue ; man's part in the clanking, bustling, filmy wilderness being confined to worshipful tendance on a myriad-fingered Frankenstein, with occasional howls to show that he is at it.

This Frankenstein has, of late, grown more exacting, and demands that his human attendants shall work by night as well as by day. His will is law ; and to enable the workers to see to their tasks, the aid of the magicians of the Rue Drouet was invoked. The fable of Aladdin received a new interpreta-

tion. When Aladdin rubbed his wonderful lamp a monstrous genie appeared, and brought him the wealth he desired. The turning of a tap on the 2nd April 1881, illuminated with a flash the spinning Frankenstein, and revealed him busy at manufacturing dividends for the Central India Aladdin.

It was a great occasion. All the residents of Nagpore came to see. The familiar white chimney-stalk caught the gleam of many oil lamps which decorated the gate of the mills and the houses of the mill-hands, and looked like a pillar of light to serve for a beacon. The great invited rolled to the gate in carriages and cow-carts, forming a processional line resembling that which fills Long Acre when Beverley triumphs at Drury Lane; and the great uninvited lined the roads, and filled the ditches, and talked of the wonderful flame which came not from shale, cocoanut, or castor-oil. At the entrance, the Managing Director of the mills and the Chief Engineer of the Electric Lighting Company received the guests and led them in. All was in gloom at first; the big engine "Izad" and his brother working steadily on amid a darkness which the presence of a few feeble oil lamps had little effect upon. A crescent moon saw the party cross the courtyard and enter the portal of the mills. A few moments elapsed, and then with a warning no louder than that which a gaseous coal gives when it breaks into flame on the fire, the light of the moon was suddenly put out. A brighter, miniature moon shone full-orbed by the engine-room, making the pulses of the twin Behemoths quicken with exultation. A second moon shining from the corridor invited the loiterer to enter; and hurrying through passages yet unlighted, he came to a little chamber like a Captain's cabin, within which two poor little beer-firkins (for such they looked) were being made to revolve at a terrific speed by the compulsion of a pair of leathern bands, looped down from the shafting overhead. Against the wall of the cabin was a small tap. To this a

lady's hand applied a splendid key made of silver and polished stone ; and lo ! with a sound as of a chestnut popping, the unillumined half of the building leapt into light. Everybody said " ah-h !" with a *tremendo* of delight in the utterance of it ; and two hundred hot, uplifted faces gazed with uninjured sight upon the ground-glass globes whence the silvery splendour issued. Then each began to eye his neighbour and to find him singularly *shining*—almost as irradiate, perhaps, as Moses was when he came down from the Mount. A feeling of shyness followed ; a kind of sensation of being seen too much of, and a craving for a veil. To remove this temporary awkwardness, the Manager organized a " Noah's Ark party ;" and ladies and gentlemen went arm-in-arm round the mills in a gay and smiling procession. The piles of white cotton were softer and fluffier than ever in the clear pale beam of the artificial moonlight ; the doorways cast romantic shadows ; the myriad-fingered Frankenstein was gay with paper flags and flowers, and seemed to rejoice in his extended mastery. The tour of the works completed, the party were bounteously refreshed with tray-loads of grapes, ices, and champagne, and an ardent photographic artist was allowed to bring his *camera* to bear upon the couches where the ladies rested. A dozen Jablochkoff candles (lanky pencils of white plaster with parallel mouldings of copper-coated charcoal, looking for all the world like sections of willow-wands) were stuck on end on a board, and lighted. There was much competition for standing-room behind the couches ; and six native princes and princesses, and an aged Mahratta nobleman, cast themselves down in the foreground. Those who could not get into the field of view stood admiring around, and chaffed their luckier friends into facial sweetness. When his focus was right, the impetuous artist struck a piece of metal violently with a hammer, in order to emphasize that request for steadiness which the rattle of machinery did not

allow him to audibly utter. The request was in the main responded to; but a little princess in the foreground kept her fan going vigorously, and the Mahratta nobleman was ever enforcing stillness with uplifted and wavering finger. It seemed an age before that picture was taken. A Portuguese waiter could not abide it; and hurried across the scene with a bottle of champagne in his hand, just before the cap of the lens swooped down from its frenzied poise. There was much cheering and congratulation when the agony was over; and then most of the company went home to dream that they had travelled to Adeph and back in the engine room of a steamer, with the moon shining down the hatchway from where it stood nailed to the funnel.

CAN I FORGET ?

I.

CAN I forget ? Ah ! no, for yet
 The fragrance of my love for thee
 Is like an odorous balsam set
 Within the shrine of memory !
 Not left a prey to sharp decay,
 But fair with lilies and lapped in balm,
 The dead face of a by-gone day
 Lies perfect in enduring calm !

II.

Can I forget ? Ah ! no, for yet
 Through sacred aisles my thoughts are led,
 Again my cheeks with tears are wet
 To hear the Requiem for the dead :—
 “ Cease to deplore : the dream is o'er
 Which thou didst cherish yesternight,
 And in the tomb of nevermore
 Is laid the day of thy delight !”

• III.

Can I forget ? Ah ! no, for yet
Above the chamber of the shrine
With carven flowers a cross is fret
And briars with ivy intertwine :
And in my brain with weary pain
The print of that cold cross I bear,
Whereon the legend runneth plain :—
“ The grave of thy love’s hope is there !”

SKY RACES. •

Why they are called “sky races,” I never could make out; but, on mature consideration, I am inclined to believe they have nothing to do with the Greek word *okta* seeing that they are mostly run in the sunlight. I am of the opinion that the phrase is elliptical, being, in full, “sky-blue races;” in reference to the fancyf or that colour, which is so noticeable a feature in the costumes of the gentlemen-jockeys. Having settled this point, let me pass on at once to the gentlemen-jockeys, and ask the question—Why is itthat there is so much latent jockeyism in English humanity ? To see English lovers of the sport at these sky races, you would fancy that they had all been born and bred to the profession. There is such an air of knowingness and nattiness about them when they don the cap and jacket. I suppose good horses make good riders, and England is such a country for horses. Then there is no hitch in the forms and procedure appropriate to the occasion; the clerks of the Course show their favours off in the proper places ; the starters are to the fore with their flags ; the laborious gentleman at the weighing scales weighs away like the balance-holder in the Egyptian *Hades* ; the Judge is a Judge, indeed. One would think they had been rehcarsing it all for a week before !

Then, how wonderfully the proper furniture turns up just when it is wanted! *A priori*, you would have been sure that no such thing as a *pucca* hand-bell, like that one hears rung on English railway-platforms, or which the muffin-man, dear to memory, used to tintinabulate in the streets, could have been found in the wilds of the mofussil,—yet there it is, in the hands of a steward, who will presently get all the noise out of it that its cracked sides are capable of. Here, too, is a wonderful machine called a *pari mutuel* box, with strange slits and slides in it, which must be a highly inconvenient article of furniture for any one to carry about with him, on the chance of a sky race turning up somewhere. Good people there always are who sacrifice themselves for the common weal; and all I can say is, that I hope the owner of the box will get something out of it when the sporting bachelors, who are popping their yager cards into the slits, have done their part in the business. Observe what is called the grand stand. A nice, airy edifice, with a *chhappar** roof to keep the sun off. A fine breeze comes over the race-course in front. On each side of the rails are all the dark men, women and children from the neighbouring bazaar. Every tenth family has brought its dog with it.

The native policemen, who are distributed at regular intervals along the rails, are uneasily conscious of the presence of these dogs, and of an undignified function which has given to the right hand of each man a long peeled wand. When a cur gets on to the course, *A* on the right side flogs it over to *B* on the left side, who sacrifices it across to *C* on the right side, and so on, in zig-zags, all down the line. A hilarious recollection of Epsom has roused some British soldiers to the fittingness of converting themselves into Christy Minstrels for the nonce; and with blackened faces and very pronounced coat-tails, they are making feeble attempts in the traditional line of bones,

* Thatch of grass.

tambourine, and banjo. The families from the bazaar accept their costume and minstrelsy with considerable pleasure ; but the British soldier in uniform exhibits an amused contempt for the performance. Away go the ponies to the starting-post. Remark the different stylos—airy canter, slap-dash, gallop, easy amble. Now the starters on horse-back, with the flags, have a trying time of it. A certain hard-mouthed pony is perpetually breaking away and spoiling their starts. At the first suspicion of a dip in the flag, he is off down the course, and does the whole distance beautifully with a capital finish, all by himself, before he can be stopped and brought back.

Three times in succession he does it ; and thrice the start is provokingly spoiled. At last, to the relief of everybody, he hies away across country, pursued by the clerks of the Course, and is out of it altogether. There follows the usual vision of coloured caps and sleeves in mad career, amid the acclamations of the crowd. Between each race the Christy Minstrels have their walk round, the grand stand chatters, the *pari mutuel* box gathers its solemn cluster, the riders weigh in for the next event. Behold a native jockey, resplendent in purple and gold, who has several pounds of handicap-ping weights to stow away in his saddle cloth, and does not exactly know how to stow them. He has brought bits of lead of various sizes and shapes,—round, triangular, oblong, nondescript,—and there are only two pockets to put them in. So he crams them in anyhow, without regard to the distribution of weight. By-and-by, a riderless horse careering over the plain tells us that his over-balanced saddle has slipped. We are sorry for the sporting owner ; but every one says “ just like a native ! ” The traditional folly of the Indian exhibits a provoking exception, however, later in the day, when the regimental *munshi*, mounted on his own “ *tat*,” snatches the Lilliput race. Clever old *munshi* ! How he played a waiting game ! How like an Arab of the desert,

he looked, as he flashed by the winning post with his white beard floating in the wind ! The regiment are rather proud of him. I am reminded of another important subject of debate which remains to be ventilated—what is the use of a regimental *munshi*? Of course, the idea that he teaches anybody in the regiment to which he is attached, anything in particular, is long ago exploded. As to teaching Hindustani, that is unnecessary : English is a much more convenient tongue to know in this country. It can't be that he teaches English Grammar. Upon the whole, I incline to the belief that he is maintained on account of his cleverness in buying serviceable ponies, and in sometimes winning a "sky race" or two for the honour of the regiment. Peace be to his beard !

RHYMES' REWARD.

IN the golden Indian clime,
 Whose gold is in the air,
 And the stars have a silver chime
 (There is little silver elsewhere !)
 In a happy, or hapless, morning of time,
 I plucked me a posy of common Rhyme.

II.

I tossed it abroad on the air !
 It flounced on the ears of many—
 Made an enemy here and there,
 And did not earn me a penny !
 But something it won which was worth the care—
 Something not found, friend, everywhere !

III.

It won me a kindly thought,
 Born in a bosom fair ;
 Flashed by the eyes love sought,
 With a worship tender and rare !
 And the end of it is that in joyous sport
 I pipe far more than a plain man ought !

IV.

Can I not rest content
 With her sunny favour won ?
 Shall I follow a blind man's bent
 And play old tunes in the sun ?
 Fie ! What a skirl from the chanter went !
 I must stop friend, now, for my breath is spent.

WITH THE NAGPORE HUNT.

THE Deputy Commissioner of the Wardha district has a two-fold interest in *Sind-bans*. Those long, narrow strips of jungle, which intersect the cultivation of the southern portion of the district, take their name from the toddy palms of which they are mainly composed. The right to tap the toddy-trees for the festive juice which they afford has been matter for hot controversy between him and the Malguzars : and the whacking of the toddy-bushes with the sticks of beaters, in order to turn out the lusty boars who lurk in the shade of them, is matter for hearty arrangement with the Nagpore Hunt.

No one who stops at the Wardha Railway Station would think, from the look of the neighbourhood, that there was any fun to be got out of it anyhow. Everything looks yellow and

bare, and dusty. A couple of straight-backed ridges, with only a single tree on the top of one of them, are so suggestive of fire-plates at the back of a stove, that the monotonous level of the plain would be almost better without them. It is hard to understand how the seedy Serai,* the gaunt Cotton Press, and the melancholy Dak Bungalow with its niggardly hedge, came to get themselves into so desperate a situation. The meagre saplings, which the Deputy Commissioner calls an "avenue" in his annual report, seem to grieve over the consciousness that each has only a few cubic feet of mould dropped in an excavation in the rocky soil, within which their roots may ball and twine. Their querulous leaves seem to repeat to the dry wind the sad story of how Wardha was founded. "I will not budge another yard," said the stoutest and hottest member of the prospecting committee who were sent out to look for a site. The rest took pity on him; and from the spot where he sat down exhausted, they laid out the lines of the station.

Wardha, however, has a great future in store. It is already a junction. It may be described as the Mugby junction of the Central Provinces. There is a refreshment room, where you can get a fair notion of how the local goats and fowls thrive in the arid solitudes. A polite Parsce formerly assisted digestion by his urbanity and his amusing want of faith in machine-made ice; but he failed to supply a railway-officer with the proper quantity of Wenham, and now a representative of Goa reigns in his stead.

The great Wardha Coal State Railway runs from this place to Warora, passing through the cotton mart of Hinganghat. The colliery of Warora is really in the Chanda district; but that is a picturesque detail which cannot affect the scientific principles of railway nomenclature. The coal is regarded as a naturalized subject of Wardha, for it is stacked at Wardha

* Native rest-house.

station for delivery to the G. I. P. The line passes through a slightly undulating plain, covered with cotton and jowar crops, which improve in description as the train goes farther south. Now and again, a black buck with his following of does may be seen bounding away through the jowarry. Engineers have made him timid. *Venatio viam parat* should be their motto. In this country railway construction and maintenance go hand-in-hand with sport. The youthful Engineer on his trolley, with coolies behind him (nimble as tight-rope walkers on the polished rails), and his rifle and dog beside him, is a familiar sight. The prospect of black buck gives a zest to inspection of permanent ways which the performance of this duty lacks at home. The love of chase spreads to the station-masters and engine-drivers. Drivers have been known to pull up the "Mixed" in order that they might alight and do a little deer-stalking. Strange-looking hounds—

Veloces Spartæ catulos, acremque Molossum,
are to be seen basking at the doors of some Way Inspectors' houses. At the station of Soniganw on this Hinganghat line, there is a rifle-range, the firing point of which is in the centre of the platform, the target being a painted stone upon a crag of bare trap-rock which rises opposite. Why a station was made at Soniganw, it is difficult to say. No one ever seems to get in or to get out there. Yet the architects were sanguine that their building would have to be enlarged, and left big binding-stones sticking out at the ends, with a stout cable and chain drooping across them. It looks, for all the world, like a lacustrine pier-head left dry by seismic upheaval. A truck-load of goods in the year is all the business Soniganw does at present; but, like Wardha, it may have a future before it. For the Nagpore Hunt it is a very useful institution. Three miles away from here are the *Sind-bans* of Goji. At Goji are yearly pitch'd the tents of the Hunt in its holiday march through the district.

It is ten o'clock in the forenoon. Lots have been drawn, and five horsemen go to the left of the *ban* and five to the right. The *ban* is a long strip of dense undergrowth with a narrow and tortuous *nullah* running down the middle, and the feathery tops of toddy-palms rising everywhere above. The village band is marching through, with diabolic din. The drum executes a monotonous *one-two-three* like a *trois-temps* teacher counting time; and the bag-pipe pays no attention to the bars, but tells through its nose a doleful tale about the pig which died last year. The savage music seems, however, to give the beaters heart. They "keep touch" as well as they can through the jungle, and lay on joifily with their sticks. The lazier sort merely skirt the thicket, following each other in Indian file. *Janu*, the huntsman, rides at them occasionally and drives them in; whereon, after the manner of natives, they begin to gird at their fellows, and the cry of "Bolo, bolo!" goes hotly up to heaven. Suddenly there is a great and tumultuous shouting, followed by a dead pause. Bag-pipe and tabor break sharply off, and all that is heard is a long-drawn *Ah-h!*--like the murmur of a crowd when a rocket shoots skywards. The red and white flags of the signallers posted on the tops of the outlying tamarind trees are seen to be waving violently. From the way the flags droop, it is known that a boar has broken cover on the other side of the *ban*. "Just like our luck!" we mutter and sit ruefully in the saddle. The sun is hot: and the man with the water *chagul* has a busy time. The skin is all pealing off the nose of *Narcis*, and *Porthos* perspires silently. He gazes sadly over the wide, green fields of rising wheat, diversified by lakes and inlets of azure linseed-bloom to a shady grove of mangoes, where a cloth is spread, and wishes it was luncheon-time. Presently, voices are heard from the other side of the *ban*; and we know that the riders have returned from their run. "He has broken back--a big grey boar!" is the shout.

"*Bang-wang-wang!* goes the drum and *tootle-de-tootle* the fife," and the beat jogs merrily forward once more. After a quarter of an hour of patient work the end of the *ban* is nearly reached. Suddenly out jumps the *dukar** with a hideous grunt, and making straight for the horse of Narcis, passes under its forelegs as the animal rears and wheels about. With loud *halloos* the chase is taken up, both parties of horsemen meeting at the tail of the *ban*. There is fine "going" across the wheat, linseed, and jowarry stubble. The boar bears away to the right, and the first rider is last, and the last first. Closely pressed by the two foremost "spears," he goes for a neighbouring village, crossing a blind ditch, which breaks the stirrup leather and spoils the seat of one of them. The other has hopes of piercing his hide, when, in desperation, the pig wheels round and charges his pursuers. He meets Poins, Yoric, and Porthos in full career. He just grazes the forelegs of Poins' horse, receiving a spear as he passes; and then, with one colossal shock, he overthrows Yoric's chestnut, and is himself overthrown by the violence of the collision. Yoric pitches on to his head, and the horse rolls over him. Porthos cannot rein in his steed, and is carried past the *mélée*. The boar regains his legs in a trice, and disappears in some long grass. Yoric remains face downwards in the stubble, senseless and still.

The chase is over for a while. An astonished native is shaken out of his *machan*† by an energetic jäger, and made to fetch some water and a charpoy. Yoric revives a little with the water, and is carried to a heap of chaff on an adjoining threshing-floor. All the hunters gather around. Narcis takes the opportunity of shading his face by sitting down behind a pile of *tur* stalks. A squeal from the infant abandoned by its father at the top of the *machan* suggests to the energetic

* Mahratti for Boar.

† A rude platform for the bird-scarers who watch the crops when ripening.

After the means of transporting Yoric to the tents. The child is tumbled down somehow, and deposited on the heap of pulse-stalks. Catching sight of the nose of Narcis, it flies in tears to its mother. The wooden ladder of the *machan* is torn away, and to one of the poles of it is slung the charpoy. On this rude litter poor Yoric is placed and carried to the camp.

The Hunt soothes its harassed temper with luncheon. Porthos is made happy with a mince-pie, and is sorry when it is time to mount again. The beat is resumed. Again a boar breaks. This time the animal contents itself with playing a game of hide-and-seek among the prickly bushes which stud the immediate neighbourhood of the *ban*. In one of its "jinks" it runs under the belly of a led pony and gets kicked for its audacity. The antics of the astonished syce attract the seekers, and the pig is pressed to the open. A skilful rider keeps on its flank, and when the hog bears upon him in despair, receives it so fairly on the point of the spear that the weapon sticks fast. Thus encumbered, the boar cannot go much further, and a careful thrust from Poins despatches him. He is carted to the tents; and the weary hunters follow.

FAREWELL.

I.

"FAREWELL!"—when the word is spoken,
Does the loved Past utterly go—
Is the chain of our sympathy broken
And sundered for evermore?
Is there nought in our hearts abiding
When the clasped hands loosen and fall?—
Do affection and joy in confiding
Expire at the road-bell's call?—
Ah, no!—for no joy dies wholly,
But blossoms again and again;
And the light of a love that was holy
Will never fade out of the brain!

II.

Though I never again shall behold thee,
The charm of thy spirit is mine;
Though thou never again shalt behold me,
The flower of my reverence is thine!
Though I lose thy loved image or token,
My heart keeps a record of thee;
Though the gift that I gave thee be broken,
Its sacred shrine never can be!—
Thus, with grief when we balance joy's earnings,
The lightness of parting is plain—
Yet the frail human heart has its yearnings—
God grant I may meet thee again!
